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COMPANION TO "ALL FOR JESUS."

THE

Blessed Sacrament;

OR,

THE WORKS AND WAYS OF GOD.

BX
2169
.F22
1855

BY

FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER, D.D.
AUTHOR OF "ALL FOR JESUS," "GROWTH IN HOLINESS," ETC. ETC.

"Hoc sum contentus, quod etiam si quomodo fiat ignorem, quod fiat intelligo."—CICERO.

Republished with Sanction and Corrections of the Author.

SIXTEENTH AMERICAN EDITION.

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COLL. CHRISTI REGIS S.J.
BR. MAJOR
TORONTO

Having learned that Rev. William Frederick Faber, D.D., *has authorized Messrs. John Murphy & Co. to republish his works, I cordially approve their republication, they being full of instruction and calculated to promote piety. His recent work, styled "The Blessed Sacrament, or the Works and Ways of God," is, I doubt not, highly suited for this purpose. Given at Baltimore, this 4th day of June,* 1855.

† FRANCIS PATRICK.
Archbishop of Baltimore.

TO

My Most Dear Father,

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN,

TO WHOM

IN THE MERCY OF GOD

I OWE

THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH,

THE GRACE OF THE SACRAMENTS,

AND

THE HABIT OF SAINT PHILIP,

WITH MUCH MORE THAT LOVE KNOWS AND FEEDS UPON, THOUGH IT CANNOT TELL IN WORDS,

BUT WHICH THE LAST DAY WILL SHOW.

London,
Feast of the Purification,
Seventh Anniversary of the English Oratory.
M.D.CCC.LV.

The American Publishers to the Reader.

In presenting to the American Catholic reader another work from the devout and faithful pen of the Rev. FATHER FABER, *we feel great pleasure in announcing that we are authorized to republish it, with his "sanction and corrections." The Rev. Author having supplied us with advance sheets for that purpose, we are enabled to present it on this side of the Atlantic almost simultaneously with the English edition, and at a much lower price.*

We do not deem it necessary to give any other idea of the work than that which he has thought fit to give in explanation in his own Preface. The unprecedented popularity which his other works have already acquired will not, we are sure, be diminished by the present one. On the contrary, we think that it will be much increased, for all that unction and sweetness which are so much admired in "All for Jesus," and "Growth in Holiness," speak out with much more efficacy in the present work.

PREFACE.

THIS treatise is an attempt to popularize certain portions of the science of theology, in the same way as handbooks and manuals have popularized astronomy, geology, and other physical sciences. It seemed as if in these times devotion might be the better for a more than common infusion of theology—

"Alteriûs sic
Altera poscit opem, res et conjurat amicè."

It has not been an easy task; for those who have been accustomed to the many definitions and abundant authorities of the treatises on the Incarnation and Grace, find the treatise of the Holy Eucharist a region of another sort, where authority does less for them, and consequently they are left to do more for themselves. The reason is obvious. In the matter of the Holy Eucharist heresy has for the most part limited itself to simple negations rather than abounded in false teachings: while the latter was the case with Grace and the Incarnation. As my object is not controversy, but piety, I have not argued out the conclusions to which I have come, nor loaded my pages with erudite references to books. I have made my choice among the various opinions of the schools, and I have put none forward, that I know of, which are not supported by approved writers; and at the same time I must not be understood by preferring one to another, to have qualified with any note of censure what the Church has left untouched and free.

If any should censure me for writing another book on a

subject on which so many have been already written, I would say in self-defence that I have not written with a view either of superseding the works of others or of teaching any thing new: but I plead as my excuse the words of St. Austin,* Utile est plures a pluribus fieri libros, diverso stylo, non diversa fide, etiam de quæstionibus eisdem, ut ad plurimos res ipsa perveniat, ad alios sic, ad alios autem sic.

I submit my work with all diffidence to the public, and with entire submission to my superiors. My desire has been to lay it at the feet of the Blessed Sacrament as a little thank-offering for the gift of faith in that transcending mystery, a gift given to me out of season and with a mysterious stretch of pardoning love, and which is to me the dear light of life, for whose abounding joy and unclouded surety no loss can be other than a priceless gain.

F. W. Faber,
Priest of the Oratory.

The Oratory, London,
Feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury,
M.D.CCC.LIV.

* De Trinitate, i. 3.

Τόδε δὲ μηδέις ποτε φοβηθῇ τῶν Ἑλλήνων, ὡς οὐ χρὴ περὶ τὰ Θεῖα ποτε πραγματένεσθαι Θνητοὺς ὄντας· πᾶν δὲ τόυτου διανοηθῆναι τόυναντίον, ὡς δυτε ἄφρον ἐστί ποτε τὸ Θεῖον, οὔτε ἀγνοεῖ που τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φύσιν· ἀλλ' διδεν ὅτι, διδάσκοντος ἀυτοῦ, ξυνακολουθήσει καὶ μαθήσεται τὰ διδασκόμενα.—Plato, *Epinomis.*

But let no one be ever under the apprehension, that we mortals may not investigate the things which relate to the Divinity. On the contrary, it should be borne in mind that God is not, nor ever was, without understanding, neither is He ignorant of man's nature, but He knows that men will follow Him in His teaching, and will learn what they are being taught.

CONTENTS.

PROLOGUE.

TRIUMPH 13

BOOK I.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT THE GREATEST WORK OF GOD.

SEC. PAGE
I.—The Canons of the Divine Works 41
II.—These Canons united in Transubstantiation 50
III.—Four great works of God: Creation, Incarnation, Justification, and Glorification 59
IV.—The Theology of Transubstantiation 71
V.—The Theology of Transubstantiation, continued 86
VI.—Transubstantiation compared with the other works of God, 96
VII.—The beauty of glory and the beauty of the Blessed Sacrament 114

BOOK II.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT THE DEVOTION OF CATHOLICS.

I.—The Blessed Sacrament the subject of a special devotion, 129
II.—The spirit of the Blessed Sacrament 141
III.—The Babe and the Host 153
IV.—The Mother and the Son 174
V.—The Foster-Father and his Child 186
VI.—Bethlehem, Egypt, and Nazareth 194
VII.—Altar-flowers 209

BOOK III.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT A PICTURE OF GOD.

SEC.		PAGE
I.	—The Trinity in Unity	253
II.	—The Creator in His own Creation	288
III.	—God sought and found	311
IV.	—The material world	323
V.	—God's ways with minds and wills	351
VI.	—God in theology and in the Church	369
VII.	—The Works and Ways, the Weights and Measures, the Failure and Success, of God	386

BOOK IV.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT A PICTURE OF JESUS.

I.	—The Incarnation	419
II.	—Nature, Grace, and Glory	434
III.	—The Incarnation a World of its own	474
IV.	—The Thirty-Three Years	485
V	—The Blessed Sacrament all for men	502
VI.	—The Magnet of Souls	516
VII.	—The Life of the Church	549

EPILOGUE.

REPARATION 571

PROLOGUE.

TRIUMPH.

I.

JESUS VEILED, in His own great mystery of love, offered by our priests, dwelling on our altars, feeding our souls,—this is the sacred and venerable truth which we are now about to consider. The wisdom of the Cherubim cannot fathom the depths of this adorable Sacrament, neither can the burning love of the Seraphim adequately praise the inventions of compassion which are contained therein. Nevertheless it is our duty as well as our privilege to look into this mystery. It is our daily Sacrifice, and our perpetual Food, and our constant adoration: and the more we know of it the greater will be our love of that most dear Lord whose veiled Presence we possess therein; and to know Jesus a little more and then to love Him a little more, let the little be ever *so* little,—is it not worth a long life of sadness and of care? Mother Church will give us her hand in traversing these mysterious regions of Divine Truth. She will set holy doctors round about our path, like so many guardian angels, to keep us from going astray, and to tell us the right

thoughts to think and the right words to use; while she herself, by many a touching ceremony, and many a deep wise rubric, will fill us full of sacred fear and of that awe-stricken reverence which befits the enquiry into so deep a mystery. The voice of her great son St. Thomas Aquinas still lives in her office, now with a single antiphon unlocking whole abysses of Scripture, and now in almost supernatural hymns uniting the strictness of dogma with a sweetness and a melody more like echoes of heaven than mere poetry of earth. Jesus Veiled! let us kneel down before Him in adoring awe, while our Mother teaches us His beauty, and His sweetness, and His goodness, and His nearness. When we think we know Him we shall not know the half, and when we speak of Him we shall stammer as children do, and when our hearts are hot with love of Him, they will be cold in comparison of the love which is His due.

Let us suppose it to be the Feast of Corpus Christi. We have risen with one glad thought uppermost in our minds. It gives a colour to everything round about us. It is health to us even if we are not well, and sunshine though the skies be dull. At first there is something of disappointment to us, when we see our dear country wearing the same toilsome look of common-place labour and of ordinary traffic. We feel there is something wrong, something out of harmony in this. Poor London! if it knew God, and could keep holy-days for God, how it might rejoice on such a day, letting the chains of work fall from off its countless slaves of Mammon, and giving one whole sun to the deep childlike joy in a mystery which is the triumph of faith over sight, of spirit over matter, of grace over nature, and of the Church over the

world. But somehow our very disappointment causes us to feel more touchingly the gift of faith, and the sense of our own unworthiness which makes it such a wonder that God should have elected us to so great a gift. O sweet Sacrament of Love! we belong to Thee, for Thou art our Living Love Himself. Thou art our well of life, for in Thee is the Divine Life Himself, immeasurable, compassionate, eternal. To-day is Thy day, and on it there shall not be a single thought, a single hope, a single wish, which shall not be all for Thee!

Now the first thing we have to do is to get the spirit of the Feast into us. When this is once accomplished we shall be better able to sound some of the depths of this salutary mystery. Nay, the whole theology of the grand dogma of the Eucharist is nothing less than angelic music made audible to mortal ears; and when our souls are attuned to it we shall the better understand the sweet secrets which it reveals to our delighted minds. But we must go far away in order to catch the spirit of the Feast. We must put before ourselves, as on a map, the aspect which the whole Church is presenting to the Eye of God to-day. Our great city is deafened with her noise; she cannot hear. She is blinded with her own dazzle; she cannot see. We must not mind her: we must put the thought of her away, with sadness if it were any other day than this, but to-day, because it is to-day, with complete indifference.

O the joy of the immense glory the Church is sending up to God this hour: verily! as if the world was all unfallen still! We think, and as we think, the thoughts are like so many successive tide-waves filling our whole souls with the fulness of delight, of all the thousands of

masses which are being said or sung the whole world over, and all rising with one note of blissful acclamation from grateful creatures to the Majesty of our merciful Creator. How many glorious processions, with the sun upon their banners, are now winding their way round the squares of mighty cities, through the flower-strewn streets of Christian villages, through the antique cloisters of the glorious cathedral or through the grounds of the devout seminary, where the various colours of the faces and the different languages of the people are only so many fresh tokens of the unity of that faith, which they are all exultingly professing in the single voice of the magnificent ritual of Rome! Upon how many altars of various architecture, amid sweet flowers and starry lights, amid clouds of humble incense and the tumult of thrilling song, before thousands of prostrate worshippers, is the Blessed Sacrament raised for exposition, or taken down for benediction! And how many blessed acts of faith and love, of triumph and of reparation, do not each of these things surely represent! The world over, the summer air is filled with the voice of song. The gardens are shorn of their fairest blossoms to be flung beneath the feet of the Sacramental God. The steeples are reeling with the clang of bells; the cannon are booming in the gorges of the Andes and the Apennines; the ships of the harbours are painting the bays of the sea with their show of gaudy flags; the pomp of royal or republican armies salutes the King of kings. The Pope on his throne and the school-girl in her village, cloistered nuns and sequestered hermits, bishops and dignitaries and preachers, emperors and kings and princes, all are engrossed to-day with the Blessed Sacrament. Cities are illuminated; the dwellings of men are

alive with exultation. Joy so abounds that men rejoice they know not why, and their joy overflows on sad hearts, and on the poor and the imprisoned and the wandering and the orphaned, and the homesick exiles. All the millions of souls that belong to the royal family and spiritual lineage of St. Peter are to-day engaged more or less with the Blessed Sacrament: so that the whole Church Militant is thrilling with glad emotion, like the tremulous rocking of the mighty sea. Sin seems forgotten; tears even are of rapture rather than of penance. It is like the soul's first day in heaven; or as if earth itself were passing into heaven, as it well might do, for sheer joy of the Blessed Sacrament.

But all this represents and reveals an interior world of deep worship and of countless supernatural operations of the Holy Ghost, and of the exuberant activity and inexhaustible energy of the Precious blood. A single supernatural act — how much dearer is it to God than a thousand sins are hateful; for the odour of Christ and the unction of His grace and the ornament of His Blood and the seal of His merits are on that single act. Grace grows active as great feasts grow nigh; and its preludes bring many souls to the feet of their spiritual physicians. Crowds that were in sin yesterday now for the love of Jesus have made to-day's sun to rise upon their penance; and over each one all heaven's angels rejoiced, more than over a newly-created world. Millions have made their preparation for Communion, and the least fervent of them all did something for God he would not else have done. The same millions communicated; and think of all that Jesus did in them, and with them, and for them, while the sacramental union lasted! The same millions

made their thanksgiving, and what a choir of praise was there. How many aged men will the evening find less worldly than the morning saw them. In how many souls of children has not faith started and grown, strong, supple, juicy shoots, more than a whole year's growth in one brief day: and what a glorious thing is each growth of faith in a childish soul, seeing there comes along with it such a glorious promise for eternity! And what shall I say of those deeper depths, the souls of mortified interior men? I suppose that the mere exercise of faith, to say nothing of love, in a saint is something so deep and high, so far-reaching and full of union with Christ, that we common Christians can know nothing of it. And how many real saints, how many hereafter to be raised on the altars of the Church, have been in rapture, in extasy, in transcendent communion with God this day, through the stirring of the life-giving mystery in their souls. The silent cloister has sent up thousands of sweet perfumes from espoused souls throughout the day; acts of faith enough to win grace for unconverted tribes, acts of love sufficient to expiate a sea of blasphemies and a world of sacrilege, acts of union which have strengthened and invigorated the whole Church and quickened all its pulses in places far remote from the cells, where the acts were perfected in solitude and prayer and austere concealment. Who can tell the vocations begun or achieved to-day, the conversions suggested or effected, the first blows given to a sinful habit or the crowning virtue to a devout resolve, the sins remitted or the sinful purposes abandoned, the death-beds illuminated or the souls liberated from purgatory through the quickened charity of earth? There has been a vast and busy

and populous empire of interior acts open to the eye of God to-day, so beautiful, so glorious, so religious, so acceptable, that the feast of the outer world has been the poorest possible expression of the inner feast of the world of spirit. And what is it all but triumph, the triumph of our hidden Lord?

II.

Triumph then is the character of the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament. Its spirit is a spirit of triumph. Let us get a clear idea of this; for triumph is not a common spirit in devotion, and we should know exactly what it means; for it has much to do both with the freshness and vigour of our faith, and also with that liberty of spirit without which there is no evangelical perfection.

There is a great and edifying variety in the liturgical and ritual expressions of the Church, as we might expect from the fulness of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within her. Yet most of them have to do either with a sense of sin, or with a sense of forgiveness, or with a sense of exile: and this fact reveals to us very much of the peculiar character of Catholic devotion. When the Church assembles her children on Ash-Wednesday and marks them on the brow with the memento of their mortality, which is the punishment of sin, or when she suspends her Gloria in Advent and in Lent, or when she extinguishes one by one her mystic candles amid th grave chants of her doleful Tenebræ, or when she strips her altars, as if the end of the world or the persecution of Antichrist were come and there was to be no more daily Sacrifice, all these are so many expressions of the sense of sin and of the mournfulness of our estrange-

ment from God. How deeply by this show of grief does she instil into our minds a hatred of sin and a sense of its tremendous guilt, exciting in us in the mysterious ceremonies of Holy Week almost more of humbling shame than of happy love! But when she uncovers the Crucifix to the faithful and invites them to prostrate themselves and kiss the feet of their Saviour's image, or when she celebrates the Feast of the Most Holy Redeemer, or the reparatory Feast of the Sacred Heart, that day of reparation which our Lord Himself revealed, then it is rather the sense of forgiveness which is expressed than a sense of sin, and yet still in the humble spirit of consciously unworthy penitents. Again, when she calls us to celebrate the Feasts of the Angels and of the Saints, especially that abundant Feast of strong and unusual and redoubled graces, All Saints' Day, or to join in the Candlemas procession, it seems as if the sense of exile rather than anything else weighed heavy on her spirit. It is but another form of that beautiful cry of hers from out the deep places of her banishment, whether fresh for the day's work at cockcrow when lauds are sung, or weary with so much bootless toil as the last soul-soothing notes of vespers are dying away, when for so great a portion of the year she turns from her Spouse to His Mother, almost in envy or in reproach, "To thee we cry, poor banished children of Eve, weeping and mourning in this vale of tears." So too how touching is that word 'patria' at the end of the O Salutaris, as if the very nearness of Jesus, the very privilege of the passing moment, only deepened the sense of exile, and rendered it the more intolerable, and as if the echo of our hearts to the sight of Him in His Sacramental veils could only

be that word, "country," *patria*, so sweet to an exile's ear, so sad in an exile's mouth.

This threefold sense of sin, of sin's forgiveness, and of exile, gives us a clear insight into the spirit of Catholic devotion. It is not exactly a spirit of sadness, but of pathos, mournful, humble, graceful, pining; if it murmurs, it is in songs and hymns unto the Lord, or if it seem impatient, it is because its holy desires are for the moment beyond control. It is not forward, but it is firm. It is not loudly confident, but it is in secret peace and tranquil surety. It is the gentle bravery of continued suffering, not the defiant valour of momentary martyrdom. It is all this, because it is made up of hope and charity more *sensibly* than of faith; whereas it is chiefly the element of faith in devotion which is represented to us by the worship of the Blessed Sacrament: and hence the spirit of Corpus Christi is not a sense of sin, of forgiveness of sin, or of exile, but of triumph, though ending in the soul at last, as we shall see, in a devotion of the most plaintive and pensive description. But true it is, that whatsoever in devotion is of a joyous sort, brave, persisting, trying great things and accomplishing them, quick-sighted, instantaneous, venturesome, and trustful, is of faith, and is chiefly introduced and maintained by the worship of the Blessed Sacrament. This is the secret of the fortitude of the saints.

Then again there are feasts and ceremonies expressing the past mysteries of Jesus and Mary, the gracious acts, joyful, sorrowful or glorious, which belong to the mystery of the Incarnation. These feasts are commemorative, historical, monumental, while they also keep reviving in the Church the peculiar graces and exercises of virtue,

and the heroisms of the spiritual life which they recall. They all belong to one class, because they express past events, and those events mysteries of the Incarnation; yet each one of them has a peculiar and separate spirit of its own; each has a speciality to further some particular grace in the soul and to give some cognizable shape to its interior life, or to become the dominant genius of some religious congregation. One star differs from another star in glory; and every action of our Blessed Lord is so fertile and exuberant, so powerful to produce its like in others, so full of divine energy and signification, that it is in itself a creative word, and calls forth in our souls a perfect little world of mystical and spiritual beauty and consistency. The same may be said of each of those several and successive adornments of grace and power, with which the munificence of the Most Holy Trinity arrayed the elect Mother of God. Thus a knowledge of the mysteries to which they are specially devoted will often reveal the whole spiritual history of a pious soul, and will enable us to discern the purposes of God upon it. Corpus Christi does not fall under this class of feasts, while Holy Thursday evidently does; and who is there who does not perceive at once the great difference between these two processions of the Blessed Sacrament. While the one is simple triumph and holy jubilation, the other is pensive and pathetic. The Sepulchre is there, a visible monument of what we are commemorating, and the Vexilla regis is the key-note of the whole, and our last effort to be joyful has passed away with the closing music of the Gloria. If we compare Holy Thursday and Corpus Christi we shall see what very distinctive spirits two similar feasts can have;

and these different spirits represent realities and actual operations of grace in the soul.

I seem to be wasting a great many words on a very simple truth. But if it is true, as St. Philip tells us, that it is a bad sign if we do not experience a notable fervour and sweetness at great feasts, is it not also true that in order to draw the fire and to suck the sweetness out of each feast, it is important to apprehend its real and peculiar spirit? I say then that Corpus Christi is essentially a feast of triumph. It is a day of triumph rather even than of joy, a day of power, of fearlessness, of public profession of faith, of the heavenly insult of truth over doubt, heresy, falsehood, sacrilege, and blasphemy. Its position immediately following upon Trinity Sunday is a sort of Type of this. It does not come after the Ascension in unbroken order, as one feast of our Lord following another, nor even at once after Pentecost, when the descent of the Holy Ghost had been as it were the fruit of the Ascension and the sweet token of the strange truth that it could ever be expedient for us that our Lord should go away. But it waits until the Church has led up all her mysteries into the secret fountain, the mother mystery, of the Most Holy Trinity, as if the whole collective devotion of the year rose up into the unapproachable light, and fell back again in showers of glory and in streams of celestial power and beauty upon men in the grand and consummating mystery of Transubstantiation. Hence its character of triumph. The Church Militant is blended for a moment with the Church Triumphant, and forgets her exile and her militant condition; and the worship of the Holy Trinity, which is a sort of antepast of Heaven, finds its adequate expression

in the joyous adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. It is a day when we cannot be still, and hence a day of processions. It is a feast of shout and song, one while against the earth, as if the walls of the great city of the world were miraculously falling down before our faith, while we encompass it, marching, angels and men, to the martial strains of our Lauda Sion; another while, in praise of the Church, while the whole world resounds with the acclamations of the redeemed bearing their Redeemer round the ramparts of his own impregnable Sion.

III.

But it is not enough to settle that the spirit of Corpus Christi is one of triumph; there rises the farther question of the character of this triumph, which is of course wholly supernatural, and not the mere fine feelings of patriotism or the earthly glow of some national victory. Nay, it is not so much a triumph because by the grace of God we are on God's side, as because God in this mystery is triumphing Himself over those things which are the undoubted enemies of His kingdom and sovereignty. It is His triumph as well as ours, His rather than ours.

I said that Corpus Christi was naturally a day of processions. Now the whole history of the Church may be viewed as in itself a vast and various procession, seen under all the vicissitudes of war, as a caravan of pilgrim soldiers fighting their way from east to west. Now it is in little straggling bands with the apostles on the Roman Roads, or now encamped with the obscure Proselytes of the Gate round the Jewish Synagogues in the Roman Provinces. Here we behold it, an army of martyrs, with the pontiff at its head in the dim chambers of the Cata-

combs; there it is out before the world's eyes, all gleaming and glancing with the ensigns of imperial favour and command. One while it is pushing its way across the desert to reach the unevangelized nations; another while it is curbing the inundations of the barbarian north. Now it has absorbed the whole civilized world into itself and in its mediæval splendours; and again it is mingled with the unbelieving multitude, cleaving for itself a passage through the crowd of base literatures, of wicked philosophies, of corrupted civilizations, and of debased diplomacies, never lost to the eye, always cognizable, always suffering, always royal, always unlike anything else in the world, like the children of Israel in the Red Sea when the solid waters stood up as a wall on their right hand and on their left.

The procession of the Blessed Sacrament is a compendium of Church History. It is a disclosure of the mind of the Church in all the vicissitudes of her warlike pilgrimage. It makes us feel as past ages have felt and as generations will feel in times to come. It gives us a taste of her supernatural disposition, and helps powerfully to form the same disposition within ourselves. It is not the triumph of the Church because she has finally destroyed her enemies and is victorious. Every day is only bringing new enmities to view, and unmasking false friends. The whole of the extraordinary versatility of human wickedness is simply at work to harass and exhaust the Church by the multiplicity and unexpectedness of its attacks. The empire of the demons abounds in fearful intelligence, backed by no less fearful power, and the Church has to prove it all. There is not a change in the world's destinies which is not a fresh trial for the Church.

There is not a new philosophy or a freshly-named science, but what deems, in the ignorance of its raw beginnings, that it will either explode the Church as false, or set her aside as doting. There is no new luxury of our modern capitals, but the devil or the world enter into it with a mysterious possession, in order to make a charm of it against the Church and her mission to the souls of men. Heresy, can be pious, reverent, philanthropic, a zealot for public morals, patriotic, liberal, conceding, if so only the Church can be wounded by the stratagem. No! it would be premature indeed if at this day the Church should sing her pæan because she has finally destroyed her enemies and is victorious.

Neither is the feast of the Blessed Sacrament a triumph because she is at peace. She never gets beyond a truce, and it is seldom enough that she ever has so much as that. She can never be at peace until the day of doom, nor while there is yet a soul, that is not already reprobate, left unsaved. Her very alliances must needs be full of suspicions from long experience, and in reality they are rather fresh anxieties than permissions for repose. She has often been in alliance with the governments of the world, and thereby has many a soul been saved that would have else been lost. But such alliances cost her the blood of martyrs and the toilsome sweat of popes, and at the best she can live in them only as the timid deer in the forest whose every echo is ringing with the hunter's horn. She is less at her ease in a Concordat than in a Catacomb. So with educational and reformatory movements; so with legal efforts for political liberties; so with philosophical and scientific leagues; so even with the graceful enervations of beautiful and refining art. She

has her place in all these things, because she has a mission to them all; but she does not, may not, dwell with them in peace.

Neither does she triumph because heresy is stifled all over the earth. For new heresies wax while old ones wane: and each schism as it decays is the fruitful parent of many more. In truth heresies are a condition of her life, and the unwitting cause of nearly all the intellectual magnificence of her dogmatic teaching. Nevertheless it is doubtless a pleasure and a triumph to her children to see how year after year various heresies seem to shed their Christian elements, and to work their way with a blind fatality outside the ring of revealed truth altogether. There is not perhaps a single year in England which does not see some section of protestant opinion repudiate its own starting point and anathematize its own first principles, and so either lose its hold on earnest minds, or drop with indifferent minds into the growing gulf of simple weary unbelief. An Englishman should be the last person in the world to deem the Church was triumphing because heresy is extinct.

Neither again is she triumphing because she has outlived so many foes who at one time seemed to be actual conquerors: though this phenomenon must be a daily subject for her devout thanksgiving and renewed confidence in God. The turbid flood of protestantism, daily subsiding and leaving waste tracks of dismal mud behind, never covered the earth so dreadfully as Arianism in the early centuries; and as the one passed, so will the other. Protestant prophecies are coming untrue, and making their rash authors a laughing-stock year after year. Date after date of the infallible destruction of the Papacy

passes on with the harmless course of the four grateful seasons, and the calender of heretical prophecy is left disdainfully, cruelly unfulfilled; and they will figure in the half antiquarian novels of our posterity as the vagaries of the Rosicrucians, and the sabbaths of the Lancashire witches do in ours, emblems and monuments of the undignified weaknesses of the human mind. Still souls are lost meanwhile, and the Christian's eye is fixed far more on that lamentable fact than on the successive extinction of her foes, which it is as natural and common-place a thing for her to expect as that the sun shall rise, or the harvest, plentiful or scarce, shall come in its appointed season.

Neither does she triumph because the Blessed Sacrament is to her a foretaste of the joys of heaven and of its eternal satisfactions. Men do not triumph in anticipations, and the feast of victory must be something more than the pleasant ardour of desire. Nay, truly, if I shall not seem to be uttering a conceit, I will say that this one day is the only day in the year in which she does not seem to think of heaven; rather, she acts as if it had come to her, and she needed not to go to it. And this brings me at once to the real cause of her spiritual triumph. It is because she has Jesus Himself with her, the Living God, in the Blessed Sacrament. It is no commemoration of Him; it is Himself. It is no part of the mystery of the Incarnation; it is the whole mystery, and the Incarnate One Himself. It is not simply a means of grace; it is the Divine Fountain of Grace Himself. It is not merely a help to glory; it is the glorified Redeemer Himself, the owner and the source of all glory. The Blessed Sacrament is God in His mysterious,

miraculous veils. It is this real presence of God which makes Catholicism a religion quite distinct from any of the so-called forms of Christianity. It is this possession of her God which is of necessity the lifelong triumph of the Church. Nothing short of this could be a real or sufficient triumph to the Bride of Christ.

IV.

I said before that the Blessed Sacrament was the triumph of the Church over the world, of spirit over matter, of grace over nature, of faith over sight. Now I will say more. The Blessed Sacrament is everything to us. If we wish to be all for Jesus, there is our way, there is Himself. If we desire to see how Jesus is all for us, or which is another thing, how He is all in all to us, the Blessed Sacrament is at once that double revelation. All the doctrines of the Church, creation, incarnation, grace, sacraments, run up into the doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament, and are magnificently developed there. All the art and ceremonial, the liturgical wisdom and the rubrical majesty of the Church are grouped around the Blessed Sacrament. All devotions are united and satisfied in this one. All mysteries gravitate to this, touch upon it and are crowned by it. Nowhere are the marvellous perfections of the Invisible God so copied to the life and displayed to His creatures. All the mysteries of the Incarnation are gathered into one in the Blessed Sacrament. All the lives and actions of Jesus are found therein. All the other sacraments subserviently minister to this, and it is the one only Sacrament which Jesus Himself received. It does His work better than anything else does, and answers as nothing else does all the

ends He had in view. With the Body and the Blood and the Soul of Jesus it brings with it His Divine Person, and the Persons of the Father and of the Holy Ghost, in a way so real and sublime as to be beyond expression, but which we signify by the theological word "concomitance," as if the Holy Trinity came in the train of our Saviour's Body, as its equipage and company. It is the greatest work of God, and the sabbath of all His works; for therein the Creator's love and power and wisdom find their rest. The Church can never triumph except in what crowns, completes, and satisfies the vast nature of an immortal soul; but was ever triumph like to this? It is the triumph of Creation, the triumph of Redemption, the triumph of the Sacred Humanity of Jesus, the triumph of the Holy and Undivided Trinity.

What I have to do is to prove all this, not in a controversial way, but by the authority of the Church, to loving souls. O what unfathomable sweetness there is in Jesus! Everything that leads to Him, that stands in sight of Him, that in any way belongs to Him, or after the most indirect fashion can be coupled with Him, how sweet it is, how soul-soothing and soul-satisfying, even though it be not Himself! Earth has nothing like to it, and withers away and gives out no scent when it comes near it. The very odour of His Name is as ointment poured forth. The very sign of His Cross is stronger than hell. The very fringe of His garment can undo curses. Formalities become all life and spirit, if they so much as catch His eye, or point a finger at Him. What then must those things be which are near and dear to Him, on which the golden light of His love and choice is ever resting like a diadem, His blessed Mother, His

foster-father, His great precursor, His glorious apostles, the little Innocents that died instead of Him? Has the world a love or a devotion which is enough for the least of these things? What a world of heavenly beauty there is all around Jesus; and simple souls, how happy, how intensely happy they are made by it! But when we get beyond this, when we press through the rings of saints and angels and apostles, through the calm majesty and divine magnificence of that vast city of God, which is none other than Mary herself, when we reach the very Jesus, what can we do but weep for sheer excess of joy at the height and depth and length and breadth of His incomparable sweetness; and what is this but the Blessed Sacrament itself? Ah! then the Blessed Sacrament is not one thing out of many; but it is all things, and all in one, and all better than they are in themselves, and all ours and for us, and — it is Jesus!

How sweetly beneath the shadow of this overwhelming mystery may the soul grow in the grace of humility! It is a humbling thing to feel how much we might have done for God that we have not done, how many opportunities have been wasted, how many graces not corresponded to, how poor and languid and ungenerous has all been that we have actually had the heart to do. It is humbling also to feel how little we have done for God in return for the greatness of what He has done for us, and how little we can do for Him at the best, even if we were saints, considering His Majesty and our nothingness; and it is painfully humbling to think how much we have positively done against Him by deliberate preference of ourselves to Him. But it seems to me that humility grows far more rapidly and blossoms more abundantly in

the mere thought of the immensity of God's love of us, and the unintelligible prodigality of His fatherly affection for us, where there is no thought of self at all, even in the way of merited self-reproach. This vision, for it is nothing but a beautiful celestial vision, overshadows our souls. The fires of our selfish passions go out in it. The glare of the world comes softened through it. There is nothing to distract us in the absorbing simplicity of this one sight which we are beholding. There is nothing to awaken self-love and to aim it against the nobler or better thoughts of self-forgetfulness. Humility is never more intense than when it is thus simply overwhelmed by love; and never can our souls be more completely overwhelmed by love than when they rest, silent and wonder-stricken, beneath the shadow of the Blessed Sacrament.

V.

This leads me to one more remark on the spirit of triumph, which I have said the Blessed Sacrament produces in our souls; and that concerns the relation between this feeling of triumph and the spiritual life.

Almost all the provinces of the spiritual life are pervaded by what, for want of a better word, I must call a holy discouragement. The word is stronger than I like and stronger than my meaning, but I do not know of any other. We are something more than dissatisfied, something less than disheartened. When we look at ourselves, at our defeats, nay, even our victories, we cannot help but be depressed. If we consider the multitude and weight and ubiquity of our temptations, the scene is little less disheartening, especially when we add the consideration of our invisible spiritual foes. So also the

world, and its effect upon us and power over us, are all discouraging facts of our Christian warfare. Indeed in all things our very safety consists in being afraid, in a sense of inferiority, in a conviction that we are no match either for our own poor selves or for evils from without. Yet for all this we must be joyous, gay, confident, secure; and as there are no fountains for these things either in self or circumstances, we can only find them in our faith; and our faith, as the apostle tells us, is our victory over the world. We must have some cause for triumph, something to supply us with boldness and with more than hope, something to buoy us up and to make our hearts strong within us, and our steps firm, and our eye upraised and keen, and our hand quick and unfaltering. We must have "songs in the house of our pilgrimage;" and those songs can only be "the justifications" of God. And the crown of all these is the Blessed Sacrament.

We must have something in our spiritual life to answer to the causes of joy and energy and trustfulness and support with which the world sustains her votaries. We must have something to supply for all those motives of action which we consciously abandon when we enter upon a spiritual life. Otherwise we shall become cowardly, languid, and mean-spirited. This is more especially true if we are aiming at anything like perfection. St. Theresa used to say that, if humility was to be considered the first grace for ordinary souls, we must consider that for souls aiming at perfection, courage is of more account at starting even than humility. And all this we find in the perpetual spirit of triumph with which faith supplies us. If it is unworldliness that we need, where shall we find it more completely than in that faith which is our

triumph over the world? If self-forgetfulness, where shall we attain it so soon as beneath the shadow of faith's tremendous mysteries? If consolation, when the world and self and sin all press upon us, where does it spring so abundantly as in the continual inward triumph of a believing mind?

The love of the Blessed Sacrament is the grand and royal devotion of faith; it is faith multiplied, faith intensified, faith glorified, and yet remaining faith still, while it is glory also. And out of it there come three especial graces which are the very life and soul of an interior life, an overflowing charity to all around us, a thirst to sacrifice ourselves for God, and a generous filial love of Holy Church. The very joyousness of having Jesus with us, of being in actual and delighted possession of Him, renders us full of love to others. Happy ourselves, and with a happiness so exquisite and abounding, we are anxious to make others happy also. To be full of love is in itself a pain, if we have no vent by which we can pour out our fulness over others. To our ignorance something of this sort seems the reason why God created the world, in order to communicate His own perfections to His creatures. Moreover, we want our love to touch Jesus Himself and to do Him good. We wish to satisfy our own love by showing our love to Him, in the ways which He Himself has ordained and honours with His acceptation. And all this points to the poor, the desolate, the afflicted, whom He has put in His own room since He ascended into Heaven. On days of joy and in moments of triumphant festivity, then it is that the skilful fathers of the poor know how to lay sweet siege to the hearts of men, and with gentle craft to win their wealth

from them for the little ones of Christ; and none are such generous givers, whether it be to the adornment of the material shrines of God, or to those more beautiful living temples, the poor and sorrowing, as those who are distinguished by an especial devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Charity is the choicest as well as the most exuberant emanation from the Adorable Host.

Again, in order to be spiritual, we need a thirst to sacrifice ourselves for God and Jesus Christ. Self-sacrifice is of the very essence of holiness. Love is impatient of secrecy, at least of being concealed from its object. It longs to testify itself, and the stronger and purer it is, the more does it desire to testify itself in different and heroic ways. Nay, love needs self-sacrifice as an evidence to itself of its own earnestness and intensity. How little have we given up for our dearest Lord, and how we burn to sacrifice ourselves in some way for Him. There are times when we seem to desire nothing in life but to suffer for the sake of Jesus, times when pain and sacrifice appear, not desirable only, but absolute necessities, so vehemently does love work within us. There are saints with whom these moods are almost habitual, following far off, for the sake of Jesus and by His grace, that unbroken renunciation of self which was the characteristic of His Thirty-three Years. Now devotion to the Blessed Sacrament has a special power to communicate this divine spirit. The Eucharist is a sacrifice, as well as a sacrament: no wonder the spirit of sacrifice goes out from it, and is contagious among loving souls. But it is not out of the meekness and sweetness and gentleness and bashful humility of love that this ardent

desire of sacrifice arises; but out of love's boldness, its victory, its warlike prowess, its sense of triumph.

Once more; the spiritual life requires also a generous filial love of Holy Church. People in these days often try to draw a distinction between what is spiritual and what is ecclesiastical in the Christian religion; and obviously for many purposes, and from many partial points of view, such a distinction is very capable of being drawn. But the two cannot be separated the one from the other; they lie together practically inseparable. Hence there is no interior or mystic life, not even in the cloister, which is not distinguished by a vivid interest in the vicissitudes of the Church, an inveterate attachment to her external and ceremonial observances, and quite a supernatural sympathy with the fortunes of the Holy See. Love of God and love of Rome are inseparable. To obey Peter is the same thing as to serve Jesus. Now the triumph of Corpus Christi is especially a triumph of our loyalty to Holy Church. The very thing I started by remarking brings it home to us. Here is this poor land of heresy and schism dark and desolate to-day. It has no response to the mighty acclamations of the catholic millions of other lands. It sees nothing in to-day but a common unhonoured week-day. So through the fair realms desolated by the Greek Schism there is the same lifeless silence. It is a Catholic feast, a monument of Rome. The very word triumph seems to express something more than an individual joy. It is a patriotic thing, a national exultation; and dear, most dear, as our native country is to us, the Church is a dearer and a truer country still, for it is more like that heavenly country for which we are sighing, and out of which we

are exiles at the best. We of all men need triumph; for we are cowed all the year round by the dominance of heresy. It tarnishes our faith. It chills our love. It checks us, and galls us, and unmans us, at almost every turn of our spiritual life. No one comes quite unscathed out of the trial; least of all, those who think they do, and have no fear. O we need the triumph of to-day, the feast of our loyalty and patriotism to the most ancient, the most godlike of all monarchies, the Holy Apostolic Roman Church.

But see how long I am keeping you as it were outside our subject and in the vestibule of this glorious temple of Catholic doctrine. It is half because I fear to begin, because I am afraid of myself and my subject, because I almost wish I had not begun. Look now with the eye of faith at the Blessed Sacrament, and remember simply what our catechism teaches us about it. Is it not a magnificent thing to be a Catholic? Faith is such a glorious gift. Think how it makes over to us, as if they were, and they truly are, our own hereditary possessions, all the grandeurs of the universal Church, the famous Church, the martyr Church, the Church that is never old, but ever has a perpetual freshness like the Holy Trinity, ever virgin as Mary herself, ever wet with blood as the martyrs were, ever teaching like the apostles and doctors, ever witnessing like the confessors, ever suffering innocently like the Holy Innocents themselves, and sending up a perpetual song of victory even out of the fires of persecution. O how we ought to bless God, now that we know Jesus, that we were not born in the poor times of the patriarchs and prophets before the Blessed Sacrament! Ah! how they desired to see our day and saw it not!

Nay, we even seem privileged in our day beyond elder Christian times; for the longer the Church battles with the world the more venerable she seems to become, and her victories of grace more brilliant, and the heavenliness of her ways more wonderful. Time "writes no wrinkles on her brow," but adds line after line of glory and of freshness. She seems, because we know her better, to grow more beautiful, more powerful, more bright of face, more sweet of voice, more strong in arm, more mother-like in manner. Dear Church! to-day is her great day, the Feast of Holy Faith!

BOOK I.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT THE GREATEST WORK OF GOD.

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SECTION I.

THE CANONS OF THE DIVINE WORKS.

We cannot make a picture of God to ourselves. We have no way of representing to ourselves by images or sensible figures, eternity or omnipotence. We should fall into grievous error if we even attempted to put God before ourselves in this way. Yet it is of great consequence to our spiritual life that we should have a clear idea of God; for it belongs only to the higher stages of mystical union with God to contemplate Him in obscurity, to enter into clouds and darkness, and be able to find our rest and satisfaction there. Now we can bring God before ourselves with sufficient clearness by denying of Him every conceivable imperfection, or again by affirming of Him in the most superlative way every conceivable perfection. But those who have been long accustomed to meditation, and have thus become familiarized with the works and mysteries of God, may obtain their idea of God in a different manner. When we form to ourselves as perfect

a picture of God as we are able, and then take it to pieces again to see how it is composed, we find it made up of nine mysteries, four in God Himself, and five outside Himself. The four in Himself are Innascibility, Generation, Procession and Unity, by which we express the doctrine of "Three Persons, One God." The five mysteries outside Himself are Creation, Incarnation, Justification, Glorification, and Transubstantiation. You must not misunderstand me to mean that this picture forms an adequate representation of God, or one which is perfect in any other sense than relatively to ourselves. There are nameless attributes in the Most High, depths of perfection for which creatures have no name because they have no ideas of them. There are in Him summits of beauty and glory, whose shadows, if they cast any, would fall far beyond this present world of ours, or indeed any finite creation. There is nothing in God which is so simply a cause of delighted love and abounding joy as that He is incomprehensible, and beautiful, and glorious beyond the reach even of angelic conception. But the picture of God I am speaking of is perfect in that it embraces all we know of Him, all He has told us of Himself, all we require for an intelligent love and profound adoration of Him, while it includes also in itself a history of God's works full to overflowing of motives for the most intense reverence and the most tender love.

We are not concerned now with the first four mysteries, those inside God Himself, which express the doctrine of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity. We have to do with the works which the Holy Trinity has vouchsafed to work outside Himself; and of these five crowning works, Creation, Incarnation, Justification, Glorification, and

Transubstantiation, Transubstantiation is the greatest and most perfect, as expressing most fully the interior perfections of God Himself. This is what I set myself to show in the present book; and you must be indulgent to me if I am hard and dry in the discussion, because I have many things to say hereafter which might seem mere poetry or devotional exaggeration instead of grave and sober truth, unless I have persuaded you to follow me through this investigation of the works of God.

When men speak of one of God's works being greater than another, it is not that they pretend to sit in judgment upon God, or arrogate to themselves such a comprehension of His designs as will fit them to make a critical comparison of His works. Nay, in all God's works they acknowledge that there may be, and probably are, ends and purposes of wisdom, justice, and mercy, which are beyond their sight, and are even unsuspected by them. But they speak with all reverence in a human way, to the best of their judgment, as it strikes them, and as the Church and her doctors lead them to infer. The saints are the works of God; yet as the apostle tells us, one star differs from another star in glory; and Scripture teaches us that God has given up the world to the discussion of the sons of men. In this spirit we may venture to compare the gracious works of God one with another, confessing the least of them to be deeper than we can fathom, higher than we can measure, broader than we can embrace, and more full of condescension than all the merits of angels and men could ever have a right to claim.

All human hearts which aim at the discovery and expression of the beautiful, whether by form, by colour, by

sound, by language, or in any other way, have certain canons of their own by which they are guided in their search and determined in their judgments. In God's works He is His own rule; for He is all beauty, all skill, all wisdom, and all goodness. But from the knowledge He has been pleased to give us of Himself, we may venture to draw certain canons or criteria by which we may the better discover the divine beauty of His works for our own instruction, and to gain fresh matter for prayer and adoring love. We may thus ask the question, wherein consists the perfection of the eternal operations of God?

I answer, that in our manner of speaking and according to our understanding, it consists chiefly in five things; and a work of God is more beautiful, more wonderful, more gracious, in proportion as it unites in itself the greatest number of these five things in the greatest degree.

First of all, the perfection of the Divine Works consists in the lowest depths of condescension which they reach. All God's works are condescensions. He made Himself infinitely little, says St. Ephrem, in order to make the world which seems to us so great. He had no need of us, nor of any possible created beings, however wise and holy and beautiful. Creation is not necessary either to His glory or His happiness, nor strictly speaking to His goodness. None of God's outward works are necessary. Thus creation was a marvellous act of condescension. But if the Eternal Word had taken upon Himself the nature of an angel, and assumed it to His Divine Person, it would have been a more perfect work than creation, because the divine condescension would have gone further out and reached lower down. For the

Eternal Word to take the lower nature of man upon Him, the lowest of reasonable natures, is a more perfect work than the assumption of angelic nature would have been, for the very reason that it is a lower depth of loving condescension. Had man never fallen, and had our Lord vouchsafed to assume the impassible nature of sinless humanity, in order to dwell with us and be as it were one of us, it would have been a work of such perfect love that neither angels nor men could have imagined it without revelation. What then are we to say when He has taken upon Him our passible nature, and has actually suffered, and exhausted all manner of suffering, mental and corporal, in it, not only in spite of our sins but in order to redeem us from our sins, and make us kings and co-heirs with Him in heaven? This is a more perfect work because of the still lower abyss which is reached and occupied by the divine condescension. It seems then of the very nature of God's works, because they are works and because they are His works, that the degree of condescension which they imply is in truth the measure of their perfection. The more love they hold, the more perfect they are; and the lower God deigns to stoop, the more loving is His condescension.

A second criterion for determining the perfection of the divine works, is to be found in the greatest heights to which they raise the creature. Every condescension of the Creator implies the elevation of the creature towards Himself. This is their very object. Creation itself is for this end. The Church, grace, sacraments, good inspirations, God's evidences of Himself, all mean this, the approach of the creature to the Creator. Thus to redeem mankind from their sins through the Precious Blood of

Jesus Christ, and to allow them to live a life of immortal happiness on this beautified earth, after the day of judgment, with every joy short of the Vision of the Most Holy Trinity, would have been a great work of love, because it would have raised men out of sin into holiness, and out of God's enmity into His friendship. How much more perfect a work is it to be raised to see God face to face, and as He is, and to be conformed to the likeness of the glorified Body of our dearest Lord! The Law was a beautiful work of God's compassion; yet it is so overshadowed now by the more perfect beauty of the Gosple that we can hardly appreciate its real beauty; yet as the characteristic of the Jewish Law, as compared with the loose fragments of natural religion and primitive revelation in the systems of paganism, was that men had God near to them as no other people had, so in the Gospel it is the very nearness of God to us and the closeness of our union with him, which gives its surpassing beauty to the Christian Church. So in ascetical theology we count the degrees of perfection in mortification as they raise us nearer to God; and in mystical theology we distinguish the successive states of mental prayer and heights of contemplation according to the intimacy and completeness of our union with God in each of them. Grace is greater than nature because it lifts us nearer God, and glory puts grace beneath it because it effects a closer union between the soul and God. Thus the greater the height to which any work of God raises the creature, the greater is its beauty and its perfection.

The purely spiritual character of God's works is another standard of their perfection. This is only saying in other words that spirit is more glorious than matter, and

the soul more wonderful than the body. The spiritual regeneration of the world is a more beautiful work than the first material creation, though the one could not have been without the other. To work a miracle by a word seems more perfect than to use the instrumentality of matter, though this last may often be more expedient, and give God greater glory. But matter and spirit are God's creatures, and He can use either of them separately or both together when he vouchsafes to work, yet the more spiritual the manner of His operation the more perfect do we usually account it. It is this very thing which gives such a peculiar dignity and loveliness to the operations of grace in the souls of men. Thus, supposing two divine works in our eyes of equal magnitude and with objects of equal importance, we should give the preference to the one which was wrought in a more purely spiritual manner, as representing to us in a higher degree the character of the Almighty. Thus the low and mistaken notions which they had of Messiah's kingdom and sovereignty, seem to have been the main reasons of the Jews remaining unconverted. The failing to perceive the spiritual character of the Gospel drew down our Lord's reproof upon James and John. Gross views of the resurrection of the body called forth the indignation of St. Paul, and a want of spiritual discernment caused some to fall away from our Lord at Capharnaum when He first revealed the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. God's honour is especially implicated in the spiritual operation of His works, and in the discernment of it by His creatures. We may therefore rank the presence of this peculiar *method*, as a criterion of the perfection of His works, at least when it is found in conjunction with others.

A fourth criterion of the perfection of the Divine Works is to be found in the union of continuity and multiplicity which distinguishes them. Their continuity represents the immutability of God, and their multiplicity His magnificence and liberality. Thus to be confirmed in grace, as the apostles were, is a higher state than ours, because it is continuous. Transient effects are less perfect than those which are permanent. Half an hour's extasy on earth, even if it involved the intuitive sight of God, is a less work than the abiding rapture of the Beatific Vision in heaven. The notion which some of the heathen had of God without providence, who having created the world left it to itself, is, putting aside its impiety, a less perfect idea than that which represents Him as the perpetual life of the world, supporting, sustaining, and invigorating everything; and it is so because of its want of continuity. The mystery of creation would lose half its beauty, if preservation were not included in it. Multiplicity is also an especially divine characteristic. Thus to be forgiven our sins once in baptism is a beautiful and perfect work; but when forgiveness is repeated, renewed and multiplied, time after time, in the perpetual sacrament of penance, how much more perfect and beautiful is the work of forgiveness! The glory of the Church is that the narrowness of the Synagogue has been done away, that believers are multiplied, and grace multiplied also upon each one of them. What was the creation of all this universe of worlds compared with the shedding of one drop of the Blood of Jesus? But the dust of Olivet and the stones of Jerusalem, the folds of His garments, the lashes of the scourges and the thorns of His crown, the iron of the nails, the head of the spear and the wood of the cross, all

steeped with the precious Blood of God, what revelations they are of the exuberance and prodigality of the Divine Love! Thus where we find continuity and multiplicity combined in any of God's works, it is to us a fresh mark of beauty and perfection.

Lastly, the works of God have a greater or a less perfection according as they represent and shadow forth the greatest number of the Divine Perfections. All God's works are disclosures of Himself, and as to know God is eternal life, the more complete the revelation of Him, which any work may be, the more obviously is it a proof of its perfection. Thus hell, considered simply as part of creation, is a very beautiful work. It shadows forth the unutterable purity of the Most High. It speaks most eloquent things of the splendour of His justice. Nay, silver lines of mercy are thrown across the dark abyss, in that even there sin is not altogether punished as it deserves to be, and also because its vindictive fires are preaching daily to the world and thus defrauding themselves of millions of souls who would otherwise have been their prey. Hell is terribly beautiful. Yet purgatory is still more beautiful; for it is eloquent of God's justice, His justice even on forgiven sin and on souls whom He dearly loves. It is a more complete revelation of the Divine Purity than hell, in exhibiting to us the Beatific Vision long delayed as the consequence of absolved and venial sin. Then in addition to all this, it is a revelation of love, such as hell cannot be. It is a display of the ingenious artifices of heavenly compassion to multiply the number of the saved, and to hinder their cowardice and coldness from being their utter ruin. Thus it tells us a great deal more about God than hell does, revealing ways

and characteristics of our Heavenly Father, which no contemplation of hell, however lengthened, ever could have revealed; and thus, in this point of view, it is a more perfect and beautiful work than hell. But if we compare heaven with purgatory in this same respect, it is evident that heaven is a much more beautiful and perfect work, simply as revealing so much more of God, and independently of other considerations which will be obvious to every one. In fact God's works are so many mirrors in which He allows His creatures to behold the reflection of His invisible perfections and hidden beauty; and just in proportion as the reflection is the more extensive or more minutely clear, so is the perfection of the mirror in which we behold them. And thus one way of determining the perfection of a divine work is to see how many of the Divine Perfections it shadows forth, and with what degree of clearness and precision.

These then are the five criteria by which we may dare to judge of God's works, the canons we may call them, of artistical beauty in the divine operations. We find the beauty of God in His works in the lowest depths of condescension which they reach, in the greatest heights to which they raise the creature, in the purely spiritual character of their operation, in their continuity and multiplicity, and in their shadowing forth the greatest number of the Divine Perfections.

SECTION II.

THESE CANONS UNITED IN TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

Now all these peculiar excellencies and canons of beauty are united in Transubstantiation, in the Blessed

Sacrament; and that in a very remarkable manner. The Incarnation for a fallen race, with the humiliations of our Lord's Thirty-Three years, seemed to carry the divine condescension to the lowest depth. But the Blessed Sacrament contrives to carry it lower still. Its littleness is more wonderful; its ignominies more mysterious; its humiliations more manifold and continual. It is, as we shall see hereafter, an exact parallel of the Incarnation, adding to each branch of that mystery some additional features of loving abasement and inexplicable condescension. No union between the Creator and the creature has been devised so awfully intimate as the sacramental union; neither has the creature in any other mystery been lifted to such a height as that he should be allowed, with a reality so real that no word is forcible enough to express it, to make his Creator his daily Bread. If we wish to select one mystery in which more than another the purely spiritual character of God's operations is peculiarly manifest, there is not one of the faithful who would not on the instant name Transubstantiation: for spirituality, as our Saviour teaches us in the sixth chapter of St. John, is its very excellence and crown. Where also shall we find continuity more marvellous than that Real Presence of our dear Lord which is to be with us all days even unto the end of the world; or where multiplicity more astonishing than in the number of masses daily all the world over, and the countless multitudes of communicants, and of Hosts reposing in our tabernacles?

Nowhere shall we find any mystery which shadows forth so many of the Divine Perfections as the Blessed Sacrament, nor with more amazing clearness and minuteness. We have only to look into any of our common

theological or devotional treatises to see how completely the faithful have laid hold of and appropriated this consoling truth. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that from the contemplation of the Blessed Sacrament alone we could draw all that we know of God's goodness and dispositions towards us. If we seek for a disclosure of His love, where shall we find it more strikingly or more touchingly than in the Blessed Sacrament? He loved us "to the end," as St. John says when he speaks of the institution of the Holy Eucharist, not to the end of His life only, but as commentators explain it, to the end of the possibilities of the divine liberality, to the farthest end that love could go, even His love who was God as well as Man. It is not only gifts and graces which He gives us here, but He is Himself the gift, Himself the grace. Calvary was not enough. The seven Blood-sheddings fell short of His merciful intent. Our ingratitude does not hinder Him. We have spurned His Cross and crucified Him afresh. We have trampled His Blood beneath our feet, and mixed it up with the mire of sin. Now we shall have another mystery in which we may still outrage Him, while He still keeps wooing us to His love. Was ever love like this? Was ever love so great? Was ever love so mournfully unrequited?

See too how sweetly the wisdom of God is glassed in the mirror of this heavenly mystery! It was the invention of Jesus to stay in the world even when he was quitting it; to be more than ever with His people when He was going away from them till the end of the world; to multiply Himself on earth when He was gone into heaven; and to consecrate the earth with the presence of His Body and Blood when he was elevating them both to

their proper place at the Right Hand of the Father, and as it were leaving earth desolate and bare. "By the Incarnation," says Nouet, "the Son of God by a marvellous secret of wisdom found the means of making the invisible visible by covering Himself with our humanity, in order to converse familiarly with us; but in the Blessed Sacrament by a no less marvellous invention He makes the visible invisible, by covering His Sacred Humanity with the appearances of bread and wine, that He may nourish us with His Flesh and Blood. In the mystery of the Incarnation He hides Himself that He may be seen; in the divine Eucharist He hides Himself that He may be eaten. In the first mystery He lets us see the sweetness of His divinity; in the second He lets us taste the sweetness of His Humanity. So again all the circumstances of the Blessed Sacrament are full of manifestations of His wisdom. The very concealment of His Flesh and Blood hinders our fear while it defrauds us not of the reality of that stupendous food; and the very familiarity of the common-place species which He uses for His veils affords us a delightful exercise of our spiritual discernment and our ardent faith, while He makes Himself easy of access to the whole world by the cheapness and vileness of His disguise."

What a picture too is the adorable Host of the immensity of God. God by His immensity in the whole world: Jesus in the whole Host: God is entire in every part of the world, Jesus in every fraction of the Host. One Body is at one time in all Hosts and in all parts of all Hosts, and that without extension, while His presence is multiplied through the length and breadth of the earth in Hosts almost beyond number: and everywhere is the

Blessed Sacrament rendering a homage to the Omnipresence of God, worthy of it and equal to it. So that while we admire in the Blessed Sacrament the extreme littleness to which the Eternal Word has reduced Himself, that very littleness is such an image of the Divine Immensity as is not to be found elsewhere in all creation.

But if the littleness of the Blessed Sacrament is the reflection of God's immensity, the frailty of the adorable Host is no less the image of God's eternity. For the bread we eat is nothing less than eternal life. We cannot break it, divide it, diminish it, corrupt it, even though we eat it. It is whole and equal in each part, and a million others eat it with us, and will continue to eat it until the end of time: when He will still remain the bread of life, Himself the life eternal. Nay, this seeming frailty is so strong that it can hinder and destroy eternal death, and make even our corruptible flesh incorruptible at the last. He whom we adore in that Blessed Sacrament is Himself the judge upon whom our entrance into eternal life depends: and that Blessed Sacrament is itself the energy of our glorious resurrection.

Of the omnipotence of God in the Blessed Sacrament we shall have to speak hereafter, so that we need not dwell upon it now. But most true it is that there is no work of God which shadows forth so many of the Divine Perfections, as the mystery of Transubstantiation. So that all the canons by which we can test the beauty and perfection of God's gracious works meet and are crowned in this one, in all that manifold work and various mystery which we mean when we pronounce those short but thrilling words, The Blessed Sacrament! If no mind of man can measure the grace it is to have inherited this glorious

faith, what must they do for God who once in the full use of reason had it not, and by His special intervention have now received it? What can they do but sacrifice their whole selves to Him? It is but little, but what else is left them? And such a sacrifice is not generosity, it is barely justice. They are but as men who are said to have paid their debts, because they have paid all they can. The Blessed Sacrament once meant something which was not theirs, something external to themselves, the property and possession of a different religion; but now it is their own. It has become their life and joy, their solace and their strength, their worship and eternal bliss. O how worse than Egyptian is the darkness out of which the light of the sanctuary has drawn them, and in which so many souls they love are left! Alas! for us who love and those we love! no saint upon the altars of the Church has ever spoken one consoling word of the dreary darkness of those who are without. Sad enough are the words of theologians,* but sadder far the

* Since the above was written the pope's allocution of December 9, 1854, has been made public: from which the following passage is extracted.

"Errorem alterum nec minus exitiosum aliquas Catholici orbis partes occupasse non sine mœrore novimus, animisque insedisse plerumque Catholicorum, qui bene sperandum de æterna illorum omnium salute putant, qui in vera Christi Ecclesia nequaquam versantur. Idcirco percontari sæpenumero solent, quænam futura post obitum sit eorum sors, et conditio, qui Catholicæ fidei minime addict sunt, vanissimisque adductis rationibus responsum præstolantur quod pravæ huic sententiæ suffragetur. Absit, Venerabiles Fratres, ut misericordiæ divinæ, quæ infinita est, terminos audeamus apponere; absit ut perscrutari velimus arcana consilia et judicia Dei, quæ sunt abyssus multa, nec humana queunt cogitatione penetrari. Quod vero Apostolici Nostri muneris est, Episcopalem vestram et sollicitudinem et vigilantiam excitatam volumus, ut quantum potestis

words of saints:—sad indeed, and weighty with the wisdom of their spiritual discernment. Even the sunshine of the gentle saint of Sales is gloom when he thinks of those who are not of the fold, and his sweet words turn bitter as he characterizes the lot of those who are not children of the Church. What then shall they do for their Lord, for whom that Lord has turned this dismal night to certain day?

Has anything been said of the Blessed Sacrament which the truth does not warrant? Has any statement

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contendere, opinionem illam impiam æque ac funestam ab hominum mente propulsetis, nimirum quavis in religione reperiri posse æternæ salutis viam. Ea qua præstatis solertia ac doctrina demonstretis commissis curæ vestræ populis miserationi ac justitiæ divinæ dogmata Catholicæ fidei neutiquam adversari. Tenendam quippe ex fide est extra Apostolicam Romanam Ecclesiam salvum fieri neminem posse, hanc esse unicam salutis arcam, hanc qui non fuerit ingressus, diluvio periturum; sed tamen pro certo pariter habendum est, qui veræ religionis ignorantia laborent, si ea sit invincibilis, nulla ipsos obstringi hujusce rei culpa ante oculos Domini. Nunc vero quis tantum sibi arroget, hujusmodi ignorantiæ designare limites queat juxta populorum, regionum, ingeniorum, aliarumque rerum tam multarum rationem et varietatem? Enimvero cum soluti corporeis hisce vinculis videbimus Deum sicuti est, intelligemus profecto quam arcto pulcroque nexu miseratio ac justitiadivina copulentur; quamdiu vero in terris versamur mortali hac gravati molo quæ hebetat animam firmissime teneamus ex catholica doctrina unum Deum esse, unam fidem, unum baptisma; ulterius inquirendo progredi nefas est. Ceterum prout charitatis ratio postulat assiduas fundamus preces, ut omnes quaquaversus gentes ad Christum convertantur, communique hominum saluti pro viribus inserviamus, neque enim abbreviata est manus Domini, gratiæque cœlestis dona nequaquam illis defutura sunt, qui hac luce recreari sincero animo velint et postulent. Hujusmodi veritates defigendæ altissime sunt fidelium mentibus ne falsis corrumpi queant doctrinis eo spectantibus ut religionis foveant indifferentiam, quam ad exitium animarum serpere latius videmus ac roborari."

been made which the Church does not either compel us to believe, or point to as an easy inference from her theological definitions? And has it not all been said as drily and prosaically as possible? Yet surely it is a very frightening consideration! Remember, all these great things which we have been thinking of have not to do with some past mystery, like the creation of the world, which took place thousands of years ago, and which we look up to with intellectual astonishment through the dimness of venerable time, and adore the council of the Most Holy Trinity, whose loving wisdom decided on the creation of our race. Neither does it concern a tremendous far-off mystery, like the general judgment, in which we shall all have to bear our parts, and wherein we do not know how we shall have to behave; and yet so much depends on our behaviour here. We can look at mysteries so long past or so far forward with calmness, or at least without permanent disquietude or serious agitation. But the Blessed Sacrament is a mystery of daily repetition, of ordinary familiarity. We are coming across our Lord continually. Either we are calling Him from heaven ourselves, if we be priests, or we are witnessing that unspeakable mystery, or we are feeding on Him and seeing our fellow-creatures do so also, or we are gazing at Him in His veils, or receiving His benediction, or making our devotions at His tabernacle door. And what is our habitual behaviour to Him in this mystery? We are orthodox in faith; doubtless: every word of that queen of councils, the blessed and glorious assembly of Trent, is more precious to us than a mine of gold. But have the intensity of our love, the breathlessness of our reverence, the earnestness of our prayers, the overbearing

momentum of our faith, the speechlessness of our yearning desires, been all they should have been, or half they would have been if we had but corresponded to the grace which He Himself each time was giving us? There is no sign of lukewarmness more unerring than becoming thoughtless about the Blessed Sacrament, and letting it grow common to us without our feeling it. Even though the disciples on the road to Emmaus did not know Jesus till he vanished from their sight, at least their hearts, they knew not why, burned within them as they walked and talked to Him by the way. Yet how often have we been at the tabernacle door, feeling neither His presence nor our own miseries more than a beggar sleeping in the sun at a rich man's gate. True it is that the Blessed Sacrament is not a mystery of distance or of terror, but one of most dear familiarity. Yet the only true test of our loving familiarity is the depth of our joyous fear. Sacred things and sacred ceremonies, simply because they are things and ceremonies, may become common to us, though they ought not to do so. They may cease to make an impression, and it may be difficult for us always to be recollected in their presence, without this difficulty being a symptom of any very grave spiritual disease. But it is not so with the presence of our Lord's own Self. We cannot become so familiarized with His sacramental presence as to be careless and unimpressed, without its betokening a most lamentable and dangerous state of spiritual tepidity. It is very common even for heretics to have a strange sensation come over them in Catholic churches, which they do not understand and cannot analyze; and shall we be less moved than they? Yet alas! whenever we hear or read some of the great

things concerning the Blessed Sacrament, does it not often flash upon us that our conduct is not in keeping with our creed, and looking back on a long, sad line of indifferent communions, distracted masses, and careless visits to the tabernacle, are we not sometimes startled into saying, Do I really believe all this? O how many of us might simplify our spiritual lives and so make great progress, if we would only look to the Blessed Sacrament, to our feelings and conduct towards it, and its impression upon us, as the index of our spiritual condition! We are always trying to awaken ourselves with new things, new books, new prayers, new confraternities, new states of prayer; and our forbearing Lord runs after us and keeps blessing us in our changeableness and humouring us in our fickle weakness: how much better would it be to keep to our old things, to hold fast by Him, and to warm ourselves only at the tabernacle fire!

SECTION III.

FOUR GREAT WORKS OF GOD: CREATION, INCARNATION, JUSTIFICATION AND GLORIFICATION.

But we have a great deal to do yet with the works of God. So far we have only ascertained the canons of perfection by which to compare the works of God one with another; and furthermore that all these canons are fulfilled in the Blessed Sacrament. We must now examine more at length the great works of God and get some idea of the peculiar excellence and characteristic mystery of each of them, and then compare the Blessed Sacrament with them. The result will be to show it has the particular excellencies of all of them, transcending

each of them in their own line, and reserving to itself an eminence and beauty of its own beside. Let us take a glance at these great works of God.

There is hardly any mystery the consideration of which is more fruitful in the soul and understanding than that of creation; and yet it hardly gets its fair share of thought from the generality of Christians. In theology it throws immense light upon the divine attributes, sin, grace, redemption, the sacraments, and similar questions. Much is obscure until reflection on this mystery of creation has illuminated several of the most interesting regions of scholastic theology. In controversy, especially in these days, its importance can hardly be exaggerated. We have been used, and with inevitable force and justice, to repel the arguments of heretics against the doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament, by driving them to defend the mystery of the Incarnation, which they profess to believe, inasmuch as all the objections to the Blessed Sacrament lie equally against the Incarnation. So now, in argument with deists, we may defend the Incarnation against them by showing that the fact of creation is open to just the same objections as the dogma of the Incarnation. Even in devotional theology, meditation on the mystery of creation is of great consequence. In its light many of our Blessed Lord's mysteries give up deeper meanings to us. Our Lady's place in the Catholic system is more easily understood, and her surpassing supereminence more readily acknowledged. Besides that creation is itself a most deep, touching and prolific subject for meditation, as the fountain of all the other mysteries outside God Himself.

How long may we not gaze with a far from useless

wonder on that inexplicable interruption of the blissful self-sufficing life of God, and of the never-beginning ages of eternity! God was, and God only was. Yet not solitary, for the Three Divine Persons loved each with an incommunicable love: ever was the Father the fountain of the Godhead, ever was the Son begotten, ever was the Holy Ghost proceeding from Them Both. As it was at creation's dawn, so had it always been, so is it at this hour, so will it ever be immutably. He had nothing to gain from creatures. His majesty was incapable of greater lustre. His essential glory could not admit of increase. His happiness could be as little augmented by the obedience of His creatures as it could be ruffled by their rebellion. He foresaw evil. Nevertheless He created. In the mind of God, the Lamb of Calvary was slain before the foundations of the world were laid. What was it that God could want? Want! there can be no such word when the Most High is in question. Yet because language is so poor and weak I must dare to say that God did want something, or condescended to seem to want something, which it was the object of creation to supply. His power was illimitable; so that nothing was needed there. He had no justice; but then He needed none, and could have none, in our sense of justice, when He Himself, and He only, was. Life, joy, majesty, glory, wisdom, eternity, — creation could touch none of these either for good or evil. But mercy, there was no mercy in God; there could be none, that is, in our sense of mercy, because there were no creatures on whom to exercise His mercy. The Father could not show mercy to His co-equal Son and Spirit, nor They to their Consubstantial Spring and Fountain. Creation

then (I am using bold words, which will express a truth even though, like all words about God, they fall short and are inexact), creation gave God a new attribute, the attribute of mercy. His love wanted freedom; it wanted to overthrow, or seemed to want, or stooped to seem as if it wanted. Inside Himself the Eternal Generation of the Son was a necessary act, not a free one; and so likewise was the Procession of the Holy Ghost; but the love of the Most Holy Trinity (again you must bear with my words) overflowed, or outflowed, and the result was creation. For a moment does not this seem to lift the veil, and give us a glimpse into the depths of the adorable life of God? Blessed be His most Holy and dread Name, and blessed be His condescension in the mystery of Creation! We need say nothing of the surpassing beauty or of the varied magnificence of creation. We need not even try to fathom that other incomparable mystery that God created out of nothing, matter out of nothing, spirit out of nothing. He is creating deathless souls out of nothing every minute of the day and night, and every one of those souls by itself is more wonderful and important than the whole of the material world. We need do nothing more than walk on the brink of creation, and look over into the depths of that foregoing eternity when the Three in One alone was, ever blessed and glorious, and muse on the mere fact of the interruption of that eternity by creation, and we shall see how excellent and divine a mystery it is, so full of God, so radiant with His innumerable perfections, and all lying in the golden light of the Sun of justice who was not yet to rise for thousands of long expectant years. That mystery is our Mother, for out of it are we come ourselves, nay, the

creation of our own souls but a few years ago was a portion of its perpetual continuity.

What a revelation of beauty is the mystery of the Incarnation! The highest angelical intelligence could not have conceived it, without a revelation from God, and Scripture pictures the angels to us as ever bending over and looking into this mystery, to feed their love, their wisdom and their adoration, out of its depths of glory and of sweetness. The Scotist school of theologians teach that the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity would have been incarnate even if Adam had never sinned,* and that the Incarnation was already involved in the very fact of Creation. For if God created creatures in order to raise them towards Himself, He would unite Himself to them in the closest possible way; and that way it now appears is by the Hypostatic Union, the assumption of a created nature to an Uncreated Person. They maintain that Jesus and His Mother were decreed prior to all other creatures, and that all other creatures were decreed simply because of them, and on the model of them; for that He is the First-born of the Predestinate and the Exemplar of the Elect. On this hypothesis Mary would have naturally come into the world by an Immaculate Conception, which would not then have been her singular prerogative. Jesus would have taken of her a glorious and impassible Humanity, and His "delights would have been among the children of men."† Sin and the fall gave to the Incarnation its remedial character, with the passible humanity, the mysteries of the thirty-three years, and all the pathetic circumstances of

* For a more full discussion of this question see Book IV.

† Prov. viii.

our redemption. The Thomist School of theologians hold, though not unanimously, that if Adam had not sinned, our Lord would not have been incarnate, and that His coming was simply remedial, an outpouring of God's mercy to hinder the utter desolation which Adam's fall must otherwise inevitably cause. Suarez endeavours, but with very limited success, to fuse the two opinions into one system. Without venturing to decide at present, nor until I come to treat professedly on the Incarnation, between these two great schools of theology, I may say that there are many things to recommend the Scotist opinion. So far as the forgiveness of sin is concerned, God *could* have absolved us from it short of the Incarnation; and even the mercifulness of the remedial character of that mystery is if anything more forcibly and touchingly brought forward in the Scotist view: as if sin, so far from hindering this great mercy, only gave fresh pathos and new tenderness to a gift we might have expected it would have frustrated altogether. The mystery of Creation becomes more intelligible and more wonderful on this view of the Incarnation. The arrangement of the Divine Decrees seems more orderly and more consonant to what God has been pleased to tell us of Himself; and the devout opinion that our Blessed Lady was not included in the decree of sin, and the now, blessed be God! necessary and definite article of the Catholic faith, that* she was immaculately conceived, flow from it as simple consequences. But whether we look at the

* Defined in the Basilica of St. Peter by the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius IX., December 8, 1854. Blessed be the mercy of the Most High who cast our lot upon these days, and kept us alive to see this triumph of our Mother's honour!

Incarnation as a double mystery with the Scotists, or as a single mystery with the Thomists, what a boundless field of holy contemplation does it not open out to us! The incomparable wisdom of the inventions of God's mercy; the way in which creation is taken up to the Creator, the depth to which He penetrated to gather up to His majesty the farthest outlying reasonable nature, the manner in which He accomplished it by the union of two natures in one Person, the unutterable wonders of a weak, tired, insulted, suffering, dying God,—well may the angels desire to look into these things; and if it were not that the will of God is their will, they would envy us their younger brethren, because our dear nature, not their lofty and resplendent one, has been set down for ever at the Right Hand of the Majesty on High.

As the great work of the Incarnation seems to flow out of Creation, and to be the crowning and fulfilling of it, so does the work of Justification proceed from the Incarnation, or hang from it as its divine and glorious fruit or pendant. The Justification of a sinner is surely one of the most beautiful works of God, and deserves our most loving contemplation. Looking at it simply as the transit from a state of sin to a state of sanctifying grace, without any consideration of the dispositions remotely or proximately comprehended in it, it is full of wonder and of the peculiar character of the Divine operations. Whether it be conferred on the unconscious infant in the momentary ablution of Baptism, or on the adult sinner by the grace of Contrition, or again by the grace of Attrition united to the efficacy of the Sacrament of Penance, it is the work of a single instant. The first moment of the life of grace is the last moment of the life of sin, nay rather it is itself

the death of sin. Nothing comes between. Neither does God use the instrumentality of angel or saint, but He Himself immediately communicates that grace to His creature's soul, and the creature is justified not merely by an act of the divine will but by an unspeakable communication of the divine nature. It is a greater work than the creation, for many reasons. First of all, it implies the Incarnation as well. Then Creation is simply out of nothing; whereas justification is accomplished on a previously reluctant matter, the corrupt will of man. He, says St. Austin, who made you without you, will not justify you without you. Creation again is ordained for a natural good, justification for a supernatural one. To quote St. Austin again, It is a greater thing to justify the impious than to create heaven and earth. The good of a single grace, says St. Thomas, is greater than the natural good of the whole universe, and the Church in her collect teaches us that God manifests His omnipotence chiefly in sparing and showing mercy.

Let us take a case to make it clear. A man goes forth from his house into the streets of London in a state of mortal sin. The weight of God's wrath and the curse of the Blood of Christ are heavy on his soul. To the angels he is a sight of unutterable loathing and disgust, if his state is known to them. He would not dare to have his sins whispered in the crowd, for the contempt even of his fellow sinners would crush him to the earth. He is the slave of the dark demon, in a bondage more foul, more degrading, more tyrannical, more abject, than the horrors of African slavery can show. In his breast, though he hardly knows it, he has the beginnings of hell, and the germs of everlasting hatred of Almighty God.

Cain, savage and gloomy and restless, wandering curse-goaded over the unpeopled earth, was not worse off than he, perhaps better.* In the street he meets a funeral, or he comes across a priest by whose demeanour he perceives that he has got the Blessed Sacrament with him. Thoughts crowd into his mind. Faith is awake and on the watch. Grace disposes him for grace. The veil falls from sin; and he turns from the hideous vision with shame, with detestation, with humility. The eye of his soul glances to his crucified Redeemer. Fear has led the way for hope, and hope has the heart to resolve, and faith tells him that his resolution will be accepted, and he loves —how can he help loving Him who will accept so poor a resolution? There is a pressure on his soul. It is less than the sting of a bee, even if it hurts at all. Yet it was the pressure of the Creator, omnipotent, immense, all-holy and incomprehensible, on his living soul. The unseen Hand was laid on him only for a moment. He has not passed half a dozen shop-fronts, and the work is done. He is contrite. Hell is vanquished. All the angels of heaven are in a stir of joy. His soul is beautiful. God is yearning over it with love and with ineffable desire. It needs only one cold touch of death, and an eternity of glory lies with all its vast and spacious realms of Vision before him. Neither is he simply as the dropping off of sin's chains had left him; but as if from some secret depths of God's creation, there come back to him, a bright and goodly multitude, the merits of years of grace which had gone from him when he sinned, and he is clothed in such a nuptial garment of spiritual beauty

* S. Chrysostom thinks that Cain repented, and was pardoned.

as would blind the natural eye with its imperial magnificence, and to which all the many-coloured pageants of the world are but as dismal, misty, mournful shadows. And yet this work, so beautiful, so wonderful, so altogether worthy of the Divine Perfections, is not done once only, or now and then, or periodically, or to make an epoch in the world's history; it is being accomplished in a thousand confessionals this day and at this hour, and in churches, in hospitals, in prisons, on shipboard, on the scaffold, in the streets and fields of daily labour, close to the mower or the reaper or the gardener or the vine-dresser, who dreams not that God is in his neighbourhood, so busy and at so stupendous a work. For to turn a child of Satan into a Son of God is so tremendous a work that St. Peter Chrysologus says of it, that the angels are astonished, heaven marvels, earth trembles, flesh cannot bear it, ears cannot take it in, the mind cannot reach it, the whole creation is too weak to endure its magnitude, and is short of intellect to esteem it rightly, and is afraid of believing it, because it is so much.

It would take too long to examine as it deserves that other magnificent work of God, Glorification, which flows from Justification. It is, of course, inferior to the mystery of the Incarnation, because as St. Bonaventure says, it is better that Christ should be incarnate than that a man should be glorified. But although it implies justification and follows from it, it has three excellencies of its own, by which it surpasses that mystery. It is superior to it in what it produces; for justification produces grace begun, whereas glorification produces grace consummated. It is superior to it, because it is constant and indefectible, whereas grace is of uncertain tenure, and as a matter of

fact is very often lost. Again, justification always admits of growth and of further perfection, whereas glorification is a fixed state and a definite crown of immortal perfection, according to those words of the apostle, When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. Some earlier theologians, answered by St. Bonaventure, even ventured to give this mystery the palm over that of the Incarnation, as if this were principal, and that accessory. There are, as it were, in this mystery of Glorification, three abysses in which we may behold God working. First of all there is the Beatific Vision itself, the unclouded, intuitive, invariable, direct and simple view of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity, a vision so great, a privilege so beatific that no substance is within the limits of possible creation, to which that vision would be connatural. Catholic theology is full to overflowing of deep, various, sublime and most interesting questions connected with this Vision, breeding in us tenderest love of God and a most intelligent reverence for His glorious Majesty. Yet when the human mind, led by the Church, and assisted by the Holy Ghost, has gone to its uttermost limits, it is just of the abysses of that Vision that the words are true, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor man's heart conceived, what God has prepared for those that love Him. A second depth, which we may go on questioning while our souls fatten on the spiritual nourishment which these grand truths impart, is the "light of glory" as it is called, or that mysterious medium by which alone the created intellect can intuitively see God, and of which Scripture speaks when it says, In Thy light shall we see light. But what manner of light? exclaims St. Austin in the book of Soliloquies, Light immense,

light incorporeal, incorruptible, incomprehensible, unfailing, inextinguishable, inaccessible, uncreated, truthful, divine, light which enlightens the eyes of the angels, and gladdens the youth of the Saints, which is the light of lights and fountain of life, the light which is Thyself, O Lord my God: for Thou art the light in whose light we shall see light, Thee shall we see in Thyself, in the splendour of Thy countenance, when we shall behold Thee face to face. Whether the light of glory be an habitual quality, or an impressed species, or an actual concurrence of God, whether with the Thomists we hold it to dispose the understanding to receive the Beatific Vision, or deny with the Scotists that it is anything more than an efficiently concurrent cause, it is not for us to examine in this place. No one can study the question in theology without his mind being lifted far above earthly things and his heart burning within him with increased desire of his heavenly country. A third depth of beauty, and of light opened out to us in this mystery of Glorification embraces the effects of the Beatific Vision on our understanding and will, the things which we behold and know in the Word, and the gifts of our glorified bodies, and the spiritual senses developed in us by the resurrection of the just. We never can know the fulness of this mystery until we actually enjoy it; but Scripture and Catholic theology teach us enough to see that it is one of the most admirable and divine works of God.

SECTION IV.

THE THEOLOGY OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

THE contemplation of these four chief works of God, Creation, Incarnation, Justification and Glorification, has now prepared us to examine the fifth great work with which we are at present concerned, the mystery of Transubstantiation. It may be described as the true change and substantial conversion of the whole substance of the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, produced under the species by a real productive act, proximately subject to the accidents of Bread and Wine, but without any adhesion to them, the substances of Bread and Wine perishing* altogether in the act. But these are hard words. Let me explain; and at length; as we are now concerned with getting a clear idea of that which is the subject of the whole treatise.

St. Thomas says that the Blessed Sacrament is the compendium of all miracles; for in it we behold one Body at one time in all Hosts, and in all parts of all Hosts, and that without extension. We see matter putting on the properties of spirit, and accidents without a substance producing all the same effects as substances. Thus another author calls it the abridgment of the miracles of grace. It is miraculous in the substance, he says; for it destroys the substance of bread and wine, and substitutes the body of God in their room. It is miraculous in quantity; for a body ought to have extension, and the Body of Jesus under the species has none. It is miraculous in quality; for a body ought to be sensible

* See pages 74–75.

and palpable, yet the Body of Jesus is here invisible, neither is it subject to the action of any one of the senses. It is miraculous in the action; for, on the one hand, the word of a man gives even to God a manner of Being altogether new, in order that he may nourish himself on Him; while, on the other, instead of changing that food into the man's own substance, the food transforms him into Itself and communicates to him its qualities. It is miraculous in the sort of passion endured therein; for we behold here a free prisoner, a living one dead, an impassible one suffering, a Body separated from the Blood and yet united with it, risen and still buried, eaten and not consumed, consumed and not destroyed. It is miraculous in local movements; for at one and the same time He is placed in different positions, He is lifted up and taken down, He is borne to the right and to the left as well, to the east and to the west both at once. It is miraculous in the situation; for our Lord has His Eyes in the same place as His Heart, and the Heart in the same place as the Head, and the Head in the same place as the Feet; all the parts of His adorable Body are all together, and yet nevertheless they undergo no confusion. It is miraculous in all the accidents of bread and wine; for they are detached from their subject, and have no other support than the almighty Hand of the Son of God, who holds them up.

Who has ever seen, proceeds Nouet whom I am quoting, so many wonders all at once? O how true it is that divine love lives only in excesses! There are no bounds to its outbreaks, neither will it tolerate any obstacle to its designs. It is not content to do violence to the creature in order to satisfy its inclinations; but it lays hold of the

Creator, and employs the power of God against Himself. If there were question only of working miracles above the laws of nature, it were but a child's-play of His power. But when I reflect upon the indignity of the place where he vouchsafes to dwell, it seems to me that it is not nature only which is compromised in the favours He shows to man, but still more his own grandeur. For who would ever dream that so lofty a majesty, which makes the pillars of heaven tremble, would stoop to dwell in so straight a prison as that which shuts in all that is most august in the adorable Trinity? In truth, when I consider that He who fills heaven and earth with His immensity, is hidden under the roundness of the Host, and clothed with feeble accidents instead of the royal purple, I am seized with a holy horror, and am constrained to cry out to Him, O heavenly Adam! where art Thou? and who has put Thee in that state? A God in a tabernacle of worm-eaten wood! a God in a pyx of some poor metal! a God under a torn and tattered tent! Is this then the adorable Spouse who should set up His Throne in the sun? Is this the Incarnate Wisdom whose palace should be so magnificent and so superb? And behold! He is reduced to an atom, and shrouded with a poor curtain.

But let us approach the mystery, and regard it more in detail. We must almost hold our breath while we do so, for we are on holy ground, and as it were looking over God and putting our face close to His Hands, fashioning this stupendous work of His omnipotence. There are, as you know, many open questions in the Church regarding this mystery, and which are freely debated with much wisdom and affectionate piety in the schools. It would be out of place to encumber my pages with controversy,

neither can I honestly follow one author only, which would be the easiest thing to do. When then I speak of things which do not fall under the definitions of the Church, and state simply an opinion as the true one, I would not be understood either to set myself up as a judge, or to affix any note of disapproval to the opposite opinion; but simply every student of theology has his opinions, follows one school rather than another, is convinced by this style of argument rather than that, and is biassed by a sort of indescribable instinct, not less devotional than intellectual, to take one particular road across the beautiful empire of theology rather than another. I promise to give only approved and authorized opinions; but I shall not state the objections to them, as I am concerned only with my own convictions, and their devotional consequences, and not at all with controversy.

The writers, then, whom I shall follow, themselves following the lead of St. Thomas, who calls Transubstantiation the compendium of all miracles, teach that this mystery may be resolved into twelve miracles, or miraculous actions; and I shall not stop to discuss the precise and technical signification of the word miracle. Let us suppose ourselves to use it loosely. Of these twelve miracles, two concern the substance of the bread and wine, two more the species, six the Body of our Lord and its concomitants, and two the consecrator in the mass. Something must be said on each of these.

The first miracle is the destruction, the annihilation, the perishing, the vanishing, whichever word we will choose, of the substance of the bread and wine. It is not the customary language of theology to speak of them as annihilated, because according to the divine intention their

ceasing to be does not end in nothingness but in the position of the Body of Christ in their room. Nevertheless nothing whatever of the substance, of bread for instance, remains, neither form, nor matter, nor existence, nor any degree of it, but the whole perishes utterly, and as if it were reduced to nothing, without anything to succeed it. We know that if God were to restrain and to shut off the energy and action with which He fills the universe, it must all fall back at once into that nothingness out of which His omnipotent will evoked it at the first. His influx into creation, to borrow a word from the schools, is necessary to the continuance, not only of its holding together, but of its existing at all. His concurrence penetrates the whole world, circulates through it with unspeakable vitality, *substantifying*, to use an ugly but an expressive term of the scholastics, everything which is throughout creation. Now this influx and concurrence He withholds and exhausts, contrary to his general laws, from the substances of the Bread and Wine in the adorable Sacrifice. Whereupon they lose their privilege of creatures, and wither and perish away, relapsing into their pristine nothingness. This miracle is a specimen of what he might do to the whole world, if He were to visit it. But He has created it to be for ever; and, except in this solitary instance, He will uphold and sustain it, matter and spirit, to all eternity.

The second miracle, which also concerns the substances of the bread and wine, consists in the reproduction and restitution of the perished substances, when the species are corrupted or changed, and our Blessed Lord has withdrawn. It is not that the species themselves act the part of matter, or minister the material for corruption, or that

they only appear to do so. But though separated from the substance which sustained them, they follow its laws, and suffer change in due season. Thus, when the change of the species has reached that point when it would not be natural for the proper substances of bread and wine any longer to consist with the accidents, at that moment by His wisdom and omnipotence our Lord restores and reproduces the substances, withdraws His sacramental presence, and the usual laws of creation resume their interrupted sway. All this is done in so occult a manner that there are no external signs by which we can detect either the original disappearance or the fresh substitution of the substance, so that there is nothing to break the meritorious exercise of supernatural faith. Neither is it new matter which is brought forth; but rather the old matter restored, which had existed before and then had ceased to exist, as if it had disappeared from creation into some nameless receptacle of the Divine Omnipotence, to be thence once more produced. This is difficult to explain; yet so theologians teach, and for reasons which seem convincing, though they are beyond our present scope. It seems more consistent with the analogy of creation that it should be so, in order that the world may not finally lose any of its primeval matter, which was created in order to last for ever, except for the brief time between consecration and the change of the species, when it was destroyed as it were by a kind of transient dispensation. This sort of reproduction is also more congruous to the reproduction of Christ's Body under the species; for as in Transubstantiation the Lord's Body is reproduced, which was already existing, and had never ceased to exist, so in this miracle that which had had a previous existence,

and then had ceased, is reproduced. It is also more in harmony with the peculiar and marvellous character of the whole mystery and the fashion after which God vouchsafes to us His wisdom and omnipotence therein. Both these miracles concerning the substances of the bread and wine are, to use an emphatic word of one holy doctor, so "exotic" and so remote from the natural order of causes that we know of nothing at all parallel to them outside this mystery of Transubstantiation.

The first of the two miracles which concern the species, is that they exist and hold together without leaning upon any subject. This prodigy may be conceived to happen in one of three ways. God may impart to these accidents a new being, or restore to them the being they lost by the subtraction of the substances, without restoring the substances themselves. But this is not in keeping with the rest of the mystery; neither is it a necessary supposition; for the accidents have in reality never lost their being, but only changed the mode of it, by losing what the old metaphysicians call their *inexistence* in their subject. Or God may preserve the being and entity of the accidents, but may invigorate them with a new influx which should confer upon them an entirely fresh mode of existence, repugnant to that prior one of inhesion which belonged to them as accidents. But this also is an unnecessary supposition. Why should their new method of existence be repugnant to their ancient one? A form which is torn off from its subject requires nothing beyond the simple miraculous preservation of its being, independent of the method by which it existed formerly. Thus, thirdly, we may more truly conceive of this great wonder by supposing that God simply continues His in-

timate and vital concurrence and influx to the accidents, which are thus separated from their subject, so that their old mode of existence has perished. For the being of an accident is prior in nature to its union with its subject; and therefore the being of the sacramental species was prior in nature to their inexistence in the substances of bread and wine. Now, that which is prior by nature does not necessarily and intrinsically depend on that which was later, though it may depend upon it for its natural mode of existence. Thus, we may suppose that the first influx of God which gave them their being is simply continued without interruption, although in the ordinary course of things it would have been restrained at the time when the destruction of the substances deprived the accidents of their usual method of existence. And what peculiarly recommends this last hypothesis is that the style of the miracle, if we may dare so to speak, is more in keeping with the genius of the whole mystery. The accident of cold is intimately preserved in ice by the influx and concurrence of God. Supposing the ice to be thrown into a furnace, according to His ordinary laws God would withdraw His concurrence, and the heat which exists by His concurrence in the fire would expel the cold which falls away for want of that divine influx. But obviously, if it pleased God to continue to preserve that cold by His concurrence, the fire would be powerless over the ice, let it burn ever so fiercely. This may illustrate how it may please God to preserve the accidents without their substances. Anyhow, whatever comes of these endeavours to explain it, the miracle itself is absolutely certain; the sacramental species remain, when their substances are withdrawn from them. Our Lord is

to them instead of a substance. They lean upon Him, though they touch him not; and as in the Incarnation the Sacred Humanity has no human person to support it, so here in Transubstantiation the accidents are without a substance to uphold them. It is one of the many affinities of these two most holy and beautiful mysteries.

The second miracle which concerns the species is, that they suffer the same contingencies and receive the same impressions, and are accompanied by the same qualities, as if their substances had not perished. Thus they grow warm, or cold, or dry, and undergo similar mutations, just as they would do, if their subjects existed; and this not in appearance, and for the purpose of deceiving the senses, but in reality. In other words those qualities, such as heat, cold, dryness and the like, are produced there by the power of God in a miraculous way, without any subject to receive, suffer, and sustain them: and they mingle with and run into each other just as if they were tied together in a common subject. Some theologians have even spoken of these qualities as created expressly there and then; but that is not the case, except we use the term creation in a wide and somewhat less rigorous sense. We shall have a clearer idea of this miracle if we suppose fire to burn or the sun to diffuse its light in a vacuum, which they might do if God of His absolute power were pleased to concur, and thus enable the created cause, the fire or the sun, to act thus against the ordinar laws under which He has been pleased to place the natural world. Nowhere out of the mystery of Transubstantiation does it seem that God has vouchsafed to give His concurrence to qualities without a subject; and this shows us the singularity and eminence of the transcendent mystery which we are thus venturing to analyze.

We have now to consider six miracles which regard the Body of our Lord and its concomitants: and the first is the production of the Body and Blood of Christ, existing and permanent in heaven, under the species of Bread and Wine, so that He is not less truly, less really, or less substantially in the Host, than He is in heaven: and this most magnificent dogma is of divine faith. You must not quarrel with me just now for using hard words A clear idea of this mystery in your mind will soon result in increased love in your heart and deeper adoration in your spirit. Bear with me patiently, at least for a few more pages. The question is, how this great mystery, this production of the Body of Christ is effected? By what manner of divine operation is it under the species as it is in heaven? How are we to qualify and describe the action which accomplishes this stupendous wonder? Obviously it is, in its plenitude, beyond the reach of human understanding; but we can find out much by reverently searching. One way in which theologians have endeavoured to explain it is as follows: The Body of Christ is not *produced* at all under the species It is rather *adduced* there, in such a manner that Christ confers upon His Body existing in Heaven, and retaining its celestial location, a new location under the species of bread and wine; so that miraculously the same Body is in possession of two locations at one and the same moment, the one permanent in heaven, the other transient under the species. Thus no production takes place, but simply, to coin a word, an adduction. There are three objections to this view, which in my judgment are fatal to it.

First of all, it is agreed on all hands that the theatre

of all these miracles, the scene of all these prodigious divine actions, is under the species and nowhere else. Now before a new location can be conferred upon the subject, the subject must be there to be located, to be settled in its new position; because, as the doctrine of the Church requires, the conferring of this new location can only be conferred on the Body of Christ under the species, and not on it in heaven, or anywhere else outside the species. And again what is especially conferred upon the Body of our Lord under the species is a new mode of existence, by which it shall exist as if it were a spirit, namely, invisibly and indivisibly; and this mode is intrinsical to the Body, which must therefore have actually been present to the species by an act prior to the conferring on it of this new kind of existence: and this prior act must necessarily have been of a productive character, and one whereby the same substantial being which the Body of Christ has in heaven is bestowed upon the same Body with another mode of existence under the species. If it pleased God, says one great doctor, to reproduce the immense sun under a small gold coin, letting it retain the while its substantial being and locality in the heavens, He would work a similar miracle to the production of our Lord's Body under the species; and obviously the substance of the sun would have to be beneath the coin by an act prior in order, even if simultaneous in time, with its reception of its new and miraculous manner of existence. It does not seem then that a merely adductive act will satisfy the requisitions of the mystery.

Again; the Council of Trent defines that the Body is contained in this Sacrament truly, really, and substantially. Hence it follows that our Lord has as true, solid and into

gral a substantial being in the Blessed Sacrament as He has in heaven; so that by the divine power He might be preserved in the Blessed Sacrament, even if, by impossible supposition, He were to cease to be in heaven, just as now He remains in Heaven in His natural mode of existence, and would remain, if there were no Blessed Sacrament on the earth at all. But He could not exist in the Blessed Sacrament, when He ceased to exist in heaven, if merely a new location had been conferred upon His Body. To satisfy the definition of the Church regarding the reality of the Sacramental life, it seems necessary to suppose that He exists in the Sacrament by a new "substantifying" influx and concurrence of God. Neither on the other hand can it be said that He could not be preserved in the Blessed Sacrament, if He ceased to be in heaven, on the ground that in the Blessed Sacrament He remains in intrinsic and essential dependence upon Himself as He is in heaven; because then He would not have a solid and absolute existence in the Blessed Sacrament, but a respective and diminished one, which would bring Him down nearly to an image or a figure.

The third objection to this view is from the very nature of Transubstantiation itself; as a "local adduction" cannot in any proper sense be termed a transubstantiation. If wine were poured into a vessel full of water, so that the substance of the water ceased through the infusion of wine, this would not be a substantial conversion or a transubstantiation of water into wine, although the substance of wine would be put under the accidents of water. In like manner to suppose that the ingress of Christ's Body into the species expelled locally the substance of bread, is not to suppose an action which can be properly

termed transubstantiation, as the common examples of substantial conversions will show, such as the juice of the earth into grass, blood into flesh, the rod of Moses into a serpent, and the like. For all conversions consist of two things, the ceasing of the thing to be converted, and the existence of the thing into which it is converted; and if the conversion is to be a substantial conversion, both these changes must be substantial; the ceasing of the one must be as substantial as the existing of the other. These two terms, the ceasing of the one thing and the existing of the other, must be impossible together; they must not be able to co-exist, and they must mutually succeed each other. When the conversion is only one of substantial forms, they must succeed each other in the same subject or matter; but when the conversion is, as in the Blessed Sacrament, of one whole substance into one whole other substance, then they must succeed each other under the same accidents. Now the mere adductive action of conferring a new location on our Lord's Body would not suffice to effect such a substantial conversion as the Church seems to demand by using the word Transubstantiation. For these reasons we may venture to dissent from those who say that our Lord's Body is merely adduced under the species by receiving an additional location.

For the greatest theologian to speak of absolute truth in such a manner would be presumption. But we may perhaps say that the conclusions of Lessius and Coninch, which I will now give in almost their own words, seem to fit the mystery better than any other; and in a merely semidoctrinal treatise like this I need not burden myself with defending the controverted positions, or allowing objections which I acknowledge to be fair, but not over-

ruling: it is enough for me to put before others the way in which theology has led me to look at the Blessed Sacrament myself.

They maintain that the Body of Christ is placed under the species by a productive action, which may be called a reproduction of the same substantial being, whereby the same being which it has in heaven is conferred on it and somehow reproduced under the species, although with another method of existence. If God can restore what has perished and reproduce it altogether the same, as He does when He restores the perished substance of bread, He can also produce for a second time that which continues to exist. We surely cannot deny this to be within the compass of omnipotence. And not for a second time only. The actual existence of the thing does not hinder but that God could produce it elsewhere a thousand times. He is of course not dependent on the circumstances which render this impossible in the natural order of things. From one man, says Lessius, He could produce an army. As in the stores of His wisdom and power there lie countless individuals of the same species, so also in the same stores each individual may lie countlessly, and He could give forth infinite reproductions of the same individual. And although a thing thus reproduced in itself, is in act one and the same, yet virtually it is manifold: for it is equal to many in localities, in operations, in beginnings and endings. Thus it fills distant places, and in a certain sense is distant from itself. It can accomplish different and even contrary effects in different places, and thus really avail to do of itself the work of many. When it begins or ends in one place, it does not necessarily begin or end in another. In one place it may be hot, in another

cold; here it may ascend, there it may descend; here it may cease and die, there it may begin and be born. That this is the exact account of the mystery I do not say. But is this impossible to omnipotence? Is it out of harmony with other operations of omnipotence which we know of? Is it not in admirable keeping with the whole of this mystery, and does it not give a natural and commodious interpretation to the infallible words of Holy Church?

Let us now see the conclusions which theologians draw from this hypothesis, not to give it a more dignified name. First we see how in this mystery there is a true transubstantiation, or real change and substantial conversion of the substance of bread into the substance of the Body of Christ: because the Body of Christ is here produced by such a *substantific* action, that by the force of its production the substance of bread is compelled to cease. For it is produced as it is there in the way of a substance, not in any way, but with immediate reference to the accidents, as proximately subject to them, though without any adhesion. Secondly, the Fathers of the Church were justified in using such expressions as that the Body of Christ was "confected, effected, made, created," daily by His priests. For the action by which it is done is such a truly substantial productive and efficacious action, that, as Gabriel, Scotus and others teach, if the Body of Christ did not exist according to its natural being, it would by this mystery be produced out of nothing. Scotus says that, if God had so pleased, this mystery might have been instituted with the same virtue before the Incarnation, and so our Lord's sacramental life, speaking of Him as man, would have been prior to His natural life. Whatever comes of

this view, adopted warmly by the saintly Lessius, it illustrates most pertinently and also most devotionally the matter in hand. Thirdly, the hypothesis most satisfactorily explains how, as the Council of Trent defines, the Body of Christ can be truly, really and substantially in the Sacrament, not less properly than it is in heaven. And, fourthly, the hypothesis will be one way of explaining the various visible apparitions of our Lord on earth, to Paul near Damascus, to Peter near Rome, to St. Carpus, and to others elsewhere, consistently with what Scripture says, that the heavens must retain Him until the time of the restitution of all things; and this will meet the wishes of those who have a repugnance to believe that such visions were either merely angelical, or with aerial bodies.

SECTION V.

THE THEOLOGY OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION CONTINUED.

THE second miracle which concerns the Body of our Lord is the presence with it of His blessed Soul, with all its sanctity, beatific love and vision, and all its ornaments and gifts, natural and supernatural, under the same species. In the language of the Council of Trent we say that our Lord's Soul is present under the species, not by the force of the words of consecration, but by what the Council calls concomitance: that is, it was befitting and honourable for our Lord's Body, that it should be accompanied by His Soul into all its surpassing beauty, and that in a manner as real as is its own presence in the Sacrament. It was not therefore necessary that the Soul should come, neither did it directly, by virtue of the consecration.

And though it comes by the force of natural connection with the body of Christ, as the Council speaks, yet as the Body was produced under the species by an intimate, peculiar divine influx, which did not reach the Soul, the presence of the Soul requires a new distinct productive influx touching its substance, as the former one touched the substance of the Body. So that here is a fresh act of beauty and of power in order to produce the Soul of Christ under the species, and it is there as truly, really and substantially as the Body itself.

The third miracle which has reference to the Body of Christ is the presence under the species of the Hypostatic Union, by which the Flesh and Soul are united to the Divine Word. From this union the flesh of Christ receives its dignity and all its power of sanctification; and it is present under the species by a productive action of its own. For although the Divine Word is everywhere, yet the union of the Body and Soul of Christ with the Word is not everywhere; because the Body and Soul of Christ are not everywhere, but are circumscribed in a particular place. Nevertheless the Hypostatic Union is so intrinsic to them that they cannot exist without it. Therefore as the Body and Soul of Christ are present in the Blessed Sacrament by a peculiar action, so also is their union with the Word. Thus the Divine Word is present in the Blessed Sacrament by concomitance; that is, not merely by reason of His immensity as God, by which He is in all things, but also by reason of the Hypostatic Union. Hence, furthermore, though let it be carefully observed not by any productive action, which cannot extend thus far, the Father and the Holy Ghost are also present under the species by reason of connexion and identity with the Word.

The fourth miracle is the spiritual manner in which the Body of Christ exists with all its corporeal qualities, under the species. His Body, with all its bulk and its qualities, is by a divine virtue raised above the condition of a body, and receives a spiritual mode of existence, by which it is contracted as it were into a point, and is simultaneously and continuously so diffused through the species, that like a spiritual substance it is whole under the whole species of bread, and whole under every one of its parts; just as a man's rational soul is whole in his whole body and whole in each of his parts. This is perhaps the most stupendous prodigy of all this resplendent collection of wonders, and has no just parallel out of this mystery of Transubstantiation :—that a thing extended by parts should be empowered to exist spiritually and without extent; and that when the substance and existence are both corporeal, the mode of being should nevertheless be spiritual!

The fifth miracle is the multiplication, so to call it after the example of Theologians, of the Body of Christ; its multifold presence, or method of existing multipliedly. See how the case stands with a man's soul. The soul is whole in each part of the body, yet, not fully or completely but imperfectly; for it depends in one part on its existence in other parts; so that if a limb is cut off, it cannot preserve the soul in it unless by a miracle, in which case even it would be in a certain sense incomplete. Now the Body of Christ is totally and completely in every particle of the species, however small and to the senses indivisible, as perfectly as under the whole species; neither does His existence in one particle in any way depend on His existence in the neighbouring ones, but under each one He exists perfectly and independently, so that when the species

is divided, He remains complete in each part without any new miracle. This prodigy differs from the preceeding one and is additional to it; for it does not follow from His Body having the gift of a spiritual existence that it should have also what theology calls the gift of "multiplicity of complete existence." He might, for instance, have given Himself once under one species. Thus the former miracle gives to His Body the prerogatives of a spiritual substance, and this one adds to that a multiplicity which not even a spiritual substance possesses. And this multiplicity of Himself, His Flesh, His Blood, His Soul, the Hypostatic Union, what is it all but love, the same abundant, prodigal, spendthrift love which moves our tears in His Blood-sheddings and in all the mysteries of His dear Passion, and the actions of His Three and Thirty years?

The sixth miracle is the retiring of the Body of Christ from the species when they corrupt. When by any external agent or by the internal conflict of qualities the species so far suffer change, as that the substance of bread if it were there would naturally be corrupted, in the very moment in which the substance of bread would suffer alteration, the Body of Christ withdraws. It is not that the Body of Christ has any natural dependence on the species, as the substance of bread would have; but that the Body of Christ being there by a special productive influx of God, that influx is withdrawn, and it ceases to be, so that if it were not in Heaven, or in the Blessed Sacrament elsewhere, it would cease to be altogether and be annihilated. Nevertheless our Lord suffers in no way by this; for it is all one to Him whether He exist once or a thousand times; for existing once He has the pleni-

tude of all goods and all power, and a million times ten million existences could add nothing to Him. And this beautiful, worshipful marvel closes the series of those which concern His Body.

But our survey of this great work of God, the mystery of Transubstantiation, would not be complete, if we did not add to it two more miracles, which devout writers, using the word in a loose and poetical sense, are wont to notice, and which concern the consecrators of the Body of God. They are miracles rather of love than of power. One of them consists in the prodigal abundance with which our Lord has bestowed this immense gift of consecrating His Body. If one man had the power once in a century, how would the world fling itself in pilgrimage upon the one spot where the chosen pontiff was to accomplish this stupendous work. Yet God has given it to a huge motley multitude of priests. He does not require holiness of life to make the consecration valid, nor yet the profession of the true faith, nor even freedom from dreadful crimes. Even blasphemers, schismatics, heretics and apostates, so long as they were validly ordained, retain this power, and use it to the ignominy and shame of our dearest Lord, and to the profaning of His most holy presence. They make our Lord common and vile and wearisome to the people. They make merchandise of Him, and dishonour Him by simony and sacrilege. Yet He seems to care nothing for it. He looks only at us, consults only our interests, legislates only for our convenience. He must be at our doors. The Adorable Sacrifice must be easy and ready for all of us. Opportunities of communion must be cheap and common as the air we breathe. This is best for us, sweetest for us;

and as our good is the rule of God's goodness, so it is! Who will quarrel with us for calling this a miracle?

Once more: our last and twelfth miracle is in the facility of consecration. When a saint works miracles, first of all he *is* a saint, and that is to be remembered, for it tells of long years of prayer and conflict, and modest secrets of corporal austerity. So if long fasting, and great learning, and much toil, and vigils of preliminary ceremony were necessary before consecration, it would seem an easy exercise of power when we consider the stupendous majesty of the work performed. But no! Five little words, and it is done! What more easy? Marvellously easy, we might have thought dangerously easy, dangerous for our own faith, dangerous for our own reverence! So it might be if that most beautiful of all things outside Heaven, the Latin rite of the Adorable Sacrifice, had not come forth out of the grand mind of the Church, and lifted us out of earth and out of self, and wrapped us round in a cloud of mystical sweetness and the sublimities of a more than angelic liturgy, and purified us almost without ourselves, and charmed us with celestial charming, so that our very senses seem to find vision, hearing, fragrance, taste and touch, beyond what earth can give. Thus, may I dare to say it? in the Roman rite the Church has at once so guarded us and so nursed our Lord, that she has made herself a loving and a thoughtful Mother, even to Him in those His daily new births, as well as to ourselves. But why was all this facility? For the same reason as the great motley multitude of priests. For us, for our sakes, for our convenience. It is another miracle of love. To be easy of access, to be multiplied in Masses, to en-

tice lukewarm priests to consecrate Him, to be reserved in a greater number of tabernacles, to lie in more poverty-stricken homes: — this is all that Jesus wants. I had almost said it was not all for us; for it is his interest as well as ours. His luxury is to be with the children of men; and what thanks to Him when He is seeking His own enjoyment? Ah! but then, this is just the crowning miracle of all, the most touching of the wonders, the most thrilling of the truths, the most overwhelming of our obligations! Alas! Lord! earth has no scales to measure these twelve miracles of love; but man can parallel and overtop them all, not by his unbelief, for that might almost be forgiven where Thou art so inexplicably good, but by his coldness to this Thy burning gift, Thy choicest love, Thy very dearest, divinest, living Self!

Now the hard part of my work is done. If you have taken the pains to learn the lesson patiently you will thank me for it afterwards. I only wish to say that in these foregoing pages I have not put forward any views of doctrine of my own. I have done little else but translate: often word for word, as the style will have shown you; and I have borrowed only from those celebrated doctors whom the whole world accounts to be masters in Israel. Remember — I had two objects in leading you along these hard roads. One is that I fully believe a more intelligent apprehension of the Blessed Sacrament will lead to a more intense love of it; and the other is that I could feel no security that you would not accuse me of rhetoric and pious exaggeration, when I say what I mean to say in future pages; and now this body of dry doctrine, if it be dry, will support me, and

more than bear me safely through all that is to come. Nay, more than safely, for what could possibly go beyond what has been already said?

Such then is the account which Catholic theology gives of this fifth great work of God, the mystery of Transubstantiation: and what a ravishing spectacle of divine power, wisdom and love does it not present to us? It is as if we were allowed to look into the secret cabinets of God, one opening out into another, and each the scene of the most intimate operations of creative love. It is as if we were permitted to scan those processes at creation, which took less than a moment of time when the divine Fiat was uttered, yet which it would take us ages to pass in review before us, and untold volumes to explain even what our limited intelligence might hope to comprehend. Creation and annihilation, the opposite terms of God's omnipotence, and other acts mingling in themselves the nature and the characteristics of both, an assemblage of chosen miracles, the fairest and the rarest specimens of their kind, and new miracles peculiar to the mystery itself, and which have no fellows and patterns elsewhere, the ingenuity of the Divine Word to bury Himself lower still and lower in His own dear creation, till He almost comes to nestle in the bosom of nothingness, and to be as though He were annihilating Himself ten thousand times a-day; and then the way in which we sinners seem to have been consulted at every step, our wants foreseen, our advantage ensured, and the majesty of God made vile to attain these ends which we are wantonly frustrating every day; the Human Flesh of Christ as it were taking precedence of His Soul, and drawing after it His Divinity, and the Holy Trinity being

around it as if its court and equipage, and the power of this subterranean world of miraculous creation and annihilation, given out of His own hands and put almost at random into the hands of a crowd of men of the most uncertain intellectual gifts and varying moral qualities: — this is what the mystery of Transubstantiation presents to our astonished view. Surely here, if anywhere, we may say with Tertullian, Nothing gives us a more magnificent idea of God than the impossibility of comprehending Him; His infinite perfection both manifests Him to men and hides Him from them at one and the same moment!

Nowhere are we led so far into the deep things of God as by this exquisite mystery. We seem to leave the world and the world's ways behind altogether; nay, even to go out of sight of those ordinary operations of God which are familiar to us and form our ordinary practice of His everblessed Presence. We sink down, with Jesus, through abyss after abyss, knowing not where He will stop, nor where the infinite abasement of His love will be exhausted. We learn there new wisdom, new devotion, new love. Yet the very light in which we see all these things is changed, because of the very depth to which we have descended. As in the Azure Grotto of Capri, where the light changes its colour and comes to us bluer than the clear sky above or the beautiful waters below, so going down into the depths of this mystery, though the same lights of faith and reason illuminate us there, it is as though their nature were changed, and they formed a new kind of medium, through whose softness we could better see the glory of the divine operations. And what devotion this opens out to us! As we gaze upon our dearest

Lord sinking from one depth to another, as if He were searching through creation for the deepest depth which He could find, our hearts for very love are constrained to imitate Him in our own feeble way, and to worship Him in His sacramental presence by a continual exercise of interior humility. Nothing teaches us humility so much as the Blessed Sacrament. Nothing makes us long so intensely to possess this grace. Nothing gives us such a sensible sweetness or such a delightful power in the exercise of it. Our vileness and our nothingness, like a many-chambered subterranean prison, stretch out before us, cell after cell, as if they were endless, and each succeeding one darker and gloomier than the one that went before. God is in each of them, waiting for us with abundant and peculiar graces, whenever we shall come there for them; and the deeper the depth the more intimate is His presence and the richer are His gifts. There, in these depths, it is that we draw the strength of our spiritual life There is the grace found which makes us willingly and gaily choose shame rather than honour, and revel in humiliation as the children of the world revel in glory, wealth and pleasure. There it is that self-love has lost its atmosphere, and can breathe no more. O blessed death, more blessed than words can tell; for the liberty it brings is joyous as the bondage before was unendurable! There is the grace to throw ourselves beneath the feet of every other creature of God, as something which our intellect as well as our heart tells us is more vile and nothing-worth than aught else which God has made. There is the grace which makes us see our best qualities to be pusillanimous imperfections, and which hides from us all the grace and beauty of our souls; and there the grace to

cause us to feel the greater shame, the greater sense of vileness, the greater wonder at our own utter nothingness, the more God hangs His gifts about us and sheds the exuberant splendours of His love around us; so that the holier we grow, the viler we seem unto ourselves, and when saints, then intolerably vile. O blessed they who are frequent in this exercise! Blessed they who thus love to darken the world to themselves, and go underground and become conversant with these deep places, which are at once the caverns of our own nothingness, and yet the treasure-chambers of God! When they have lost their footing, and are sinking out of depth, and find no bottom, if they begin to fear as Peter did upon the surface of the sea, they look to Jesus; they see Him in His chosen mystery of the Blessed Sacrament sinking far lower, far nearer to annihilation than they can ever reach, and they take heart, and bravely and lovingly imitate Him in these His ineffable condescensions. This exercise of interior humility is at once the most natural and the most fruitful devotion which accompanies the worship of the Blessed Sacrament.

SECTION VI.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION COMPARED WITH THE OTHER WORKS OF GOD.

BUT we may arrive at a still more accurate estimate of the eminence and dignity of this mystery of Transubstantiation, if we compare it with the other four great works of God which have been specified: and in the first place with Creation. Without forcing the parallels more closely than they will bear, it is obvious that the two mysteries

are full of similitudes. The divine operations in the one resemble the divine operations in the other. A new substance is introduced under the species which did not exist before. A new mode of being is conferred upon the accidents, which omnipotence alone could confer. The whole is effected by the force of a divine word; and the action of that word is instantaneous, so that no point of time elapses between its utterance and the work effected. Again, the grand prerogative of creation is that it is out of nothing; and so, on the view given in the preceding pages that Transubstantiation is not merely the conferring of a new locality on the Body of Christ, the act by which that Holy Body is placed under the species is truly a productive act, and has no parallel except in the act of creation out of nothing; so that, as theologians have said, the two actions are akin the one to the other. But if the Scotist opinion, quoted with approval by Lessius and others, be admitted, that, if by impossible supposition our Lord's Body did not exist at all in heaven, it would be created out of nothing under the species by the mystery and divine institution of the Blessed Sacrament, then it is true that there lies in the mystery a power identical with that of creation out of nothing: only that Transubstantiation far transcends Creation, because what it produces, namely the Body of Christ, is so unspeakably more excellent. Again, another parallel with Creation may be found in the acts of quasi-annihilation which distinguish this mystery. The Substance of the Bread, if not literally annihilated, is as if it were annihilated. The same is also true of the Substance of the Wine. The cessation of Jesus, when the species corrupt, is a kindred act; and if, by impossible supposition, He were not else-

where, He would be as if He were annihilated. Now, St. Thomas teaches us that no creature of God is ever annihilated. A method of existence may perish; but the matter, or the spirit, are imperishable and must last for ever. This is what theologians mean when they speak of a thing being *quasi* annihilated, or as if it were annihilated: and these acts of virtual annihilation are kindred acts. To reduce a thing to nothing is equal to producing it out of nothing. The thought of the one leads naturally to the thought of the other. Nay, if anything, annihilation is the greater act of the two. Nicolas says,* "What we call death is not annihilation. We have no example in nature of the annihilation of a being. We cannot even form an idea of it in ourselves. Reason does not comprehend it. For the annihilation of one solitary atom we should have to put in jeopardy all the power which has created the universe, and consequently to cast ourselves out beyond all the rules of nature which that very power has established in creating it. To annihilate and to create are two equal acts. We do not comprehend the one more than the other. To produce something out of nothing, or to reduce something back to nothing, is the same miracle, and of all miracles the most inconceivable. I will say more: the annihilation of a single being would be a miracle greater than the creation of the entire universe, because it would have all against it which the miracle of creation has, and these two things beside, first the possession of its existence which that being already possesses, and secondly the propension of God, because of His sovereign liberality and fecundity, to create and to preserve."

* Etudes Philosophiques, vol. i. p. 130.

Again, we have another parallel in the hiddenness of the divine operations both in Creation and in the Blessed Sacrament. Fenelon beautifully observed long ago in his refutation of Father Malebranche,* that the general laws of nature, of which philosophers speak so much, are after all not so much manifestations of God's presence and operation, as a screen to hide both the one and the other. "Why," he asks, "has God established these general laws? It is to hide, under the veil of the regulated and uniform cause of nature, His perpetual operation from the eyes of proud and corrupt men, while on the other hand He gives to pure and docile souls something which they may admire in all His works." Thus, in the Blessed Sacrament the accidents are for Transubstantiation what general laws are for Creation. They seem to follow rules, when their very existence is against the established rules; for they exist without their substance; and they hide the awfully miraculous operations of God going on beneath them from the eyes of proud and corrupt men, while they reserve for pure and docile souls the prize of faith and the reward of a spiritual discernment. Thus, if we look at the powers of God displayed, at the unusualness of the methods of His operation, at the variety of miracles wrought beneath the species, at the depths of the divine wisdom and goodness opened there to our view, Transubstantiation is truly an immense world, whose spiritual operations are compressed into a point, another creation, a different kind of world from the common one, yet verily a world, and a world more wonderful, and telling us far more of God than that magnificent material world which we inhabit, and which lies, light

* Chap. xiv. Works, vol. iii. p. 95.

and little, in the hollow of His hand who has hidden Himself beneath the veils in the Blessed Sacrament. And as the Body of our Lord is more excellent than the matter of the earth and stars, and as annihilation is more wonderful than Creation, so is the world of the Blessed Sacrament more excellent and more wonderful than the world of earth, and the act of Transubstantiation a work incomparably transcending the act of Creation.

The affinities between Transubstantiation and the Incarnation are still more admirable; and they have often been enumerated by theologians. As in the mystery of the Incarnation the invisible Divinity is united to the visible Humanity, so in the Blessed Sacrament the invisible Flesh of Christ is united to the visible species. Again, as from the Hypostatic Union in the Incarnation there is made one Christ, so in the sacramental union with the species is made one sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. Again, as by the Incarnation the whole Word is united to each of the parts of the Human Nature, so by consecration the whole Body of Christ is united to each of the parts of the species. Again, as in the Incarnation the Godhead remained uninjured and impassible while the Humanity was injured and suffering; so in the Blessed Sacrament the mutations and sufferings, so to call them, of the species in no wise affect Christ lying hid beneath them. Yet, again, as because of the Hypostatic Union, we speak of God as suffering, being crucified and dying, when it was the Humanity alone that underwent these things, so in the Blessed Sacrament we speak of the Body of Christ being broken and consumed, when it is of the species alone that these words are true: for this sacramental union, like that of the Incarnation, brings about

a certain communicatio idiomatum, as theologians call it, in virtue of which we say that Christ is seen, touched, mingled, and the like, because the species are so; and that which we see is rightly called living, intelligent, and sanctifying, because of our Lord's Body beneath the species. Again, as in the Incarnation our Lord's Humanity did not subsist in its natural way, but was sustained by the sole Person of the Word, so in the Blessed Sacrament the species have lost their natural method of subsistence, and are held together by virtue of the Body of Christ, without any natural subject of their own. Lastly, as no created power can break the union of the Incarnation, so, as long as the species remain, no created power can dissolve the union in the Blessed Sacrament. Thus it has been rightly said that Transubstantiation is the continuation and extension of the Incarnation; and in one point of view we may regard it as a more excellent mystery; because, while the Incarnation took place once only and in one spot, Transubstantiation takes place every day, and at all hours of each day, and in thousands of places at once. It contains therefore all the excellencies and eminences of the Incarnation, while it seems to add to that mystery, at the least, fresh circumstances of grace, of loveliness, of multiplicity, and of loving-kindness towards men. If then we were to agree with some that Transubstantiation is not a separate mystery from the Incarnation, it would still be true to say that the former mystery beautifies and glorifies the latter, adorning it with miraculous characteristics which it did not possess before. In good truth, there is a sense in which none of God's works are separate or stand apart from the rest. His unity gives a unity of life to them; and it seems to me that the Incar-

nation flows as completely by way of consequence from the mystery of Creation, as Transubstantiation does from the mystery of the Incarnation; and if it were not so, all theology would be confusion.

Holy Scripture describes life very touchingly as a weary land, so weary that even the cool shadow of a rock is welcome as a divine thing, as a gift of God, or as the very presence of God himself. We should glorify God more in our own souls, if He were more glorified in other souls round about us; and they may turn the same accusation against us; so that we keep each other back from glorifying God. When we travel over vast tracts of sterile and uninteresting country, the scenes around us not only depress our spirits and throw over us a spell of unsocial silence, but they impart something of their own barrenness even to our understandings. So it is in religion. We cannot live among unbelievers, and enjoy that bright life of the spirit which belongs to those who dwell in ages and regions of faith. They, who lingering in domestic Edens they are loth to leave, consort much with those who are not children of the Church, soon become evidently the worse for it, the moment they live at peace with them and cease trying to convert them. Faith, like holiness, suffers a sort of enervation from such society, and languishes in an uncongenial atmosphere. Hence people get strange views about the easiness of the salvability of heretics, and at last sink to making the kindliness of a doctrine the measure of its truth, and that not kindliness to our dearest Lord or to His one Church, but to those who are not His or hers. Daily are good people becoming less good through the operation of this mistaken and at bottom selfish and self-indulgent

tolerance. Less and less will they brook the hard sayings and heavenly scandals of sound theology, which are to them frightening and distasteful as the terrible swords of the stern, wise cherubim, who came to expel them from their earthly paradise and its unsafe repose. If our lot be even cast amongst bad Catholics, we cannot, unless a very special grace attend us, be as those who are the companions of saints, and the associates of men who act on supernatural principles. Not only is our faith made dull, not only is our heart charged with a secret nameless weight which we cannot throw off, not only are the efforts of our charity rendered languid, as if there were poison in the water we drank, and pestilence in the air we breathed, but our understanding of religion, our knowledge of God, our sense of holiness, are all, if not killed, which God forbid! at least deprived of their natural fertility. Only that the moral world is worse far than the material. There, if the stony plain be long and cheerless, or the burning sands be fearful for their immensity, at least the bright sky above is beautiful. If the days of the wilderness be glaring and fierce, at least by night the cool starlight is full of images of peace, and the kindly dew, like the universal charity of God, disdains not even the unprofitable sand. But there are whole tracts of the moral world with apparently nothing to redeem them. There are ages and countries which seem to set up no monuments to the blessed glory of God Sterile and forlorn they are, and the poor soul that is cast upon them has hard work not to become as sterile and forlorn as they. Hence it is that holy men seem so often to retire from the business of their own day and their own land, to put aside the vulgar circumstances of

the life that encompasses them, and surround themselves with the mysteries of Jesus and Mary, and make them their circumstances, and live upon them as if they had duties to them, and consider it the business of their lives to assimilate themselves to their hidden beauty and unearthly holiness. The spiritual works of God are the shadows of the rocks in the weary land. Their souls are refreshed by them, their hearts encouraged, their minds enlightened. To walk amidst God's mysteries of grace and to be familiarly conversant with them, is as if it were the renewal of that vesper walk with the living God, which was the unfathomable privilege of our first father while he was yet unfallen, and standing upright among the glorious trees of paradise in the celestial beauty of his original justice.

It is not easy for a man to be at once religious and thoughtful without having a great deal of devotional tenderness connected with the memory of Adam. His life is a sort of foreshadowing of the history of God's elect, and the vicissitudes of His holy Church. The creation of Adam, the supernatural gifts which adorned him, the one fact which tells volumes of the character of God, namely, that he was created not in a state of nature but of grace, the beauty of his terrestrial dwelling-place, the sublimity of his intelligence, his empire over the powers and laws of nature, his mysterious intimacy with his Creator, his relation to the angels, his union with the immaculate Eve, the fall with the manifold revelations of himself, of Eve, of man's nature, of Satan's malice, and of God's perfections, his nine hundred years of heroic penance, and his justification by faith, penance, and the Blood of Jesus Christ, and last of all his suc-

cumbing to death, which was as it were his own creation: —all these are so many mysteries for meditation. He was the maker of death, and he had seen it and shuddered at it in his own martyred son. It would take years of meditation to exhaust the mysteries of deepest import which are gathered in the life of God's eldest mortal son. To him we owe it that we have been sent into life, that we know God and Jesus whom He has sent, that we love our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, that we exult in the immensity of our faith, that we rest on the assurance of our hope, that we live in the life and strength of grace and love, and that we are one day to behold the Vision of the Undivided Trinity. And if we owe him sadder things, the possession of Jesus so weakens the thought of it in our memory, that we hardly remember it more than once as the year goes round, when it comes to us as a passing wonder that the Church, in the season of her deepest mysteries, sings of Adam's fault as if it were a happy thing, as it enriched the coming of our dearest Lord with additional tenderness and a more amazing copiousness of redemption.

But why have I spoken first of God's glory and then of Adam's honour? Because I am coming to speak of that great work, the justification of a sinner, and Adam was the first whom God drew into the light and splendour of that new creation, the first whom the Blood of Jesus justified. The two things come into my thoughts at once, and work together thus. The world is very desolate, because the harvest of God's glory is not what it ought to be; and good souls feel this desolation more than they can tell, and more than the world could understand, if they could tell it what they felt. Blessed be

God! there are many souls to whom His glory is the passion of their lives. The worth of everything to them is simply its capability of glorifying God, and nothing more. Their choice of means and ends is guided by the same propension. Their happiness is their success in this single matter. Their unhappiness is in their failure, whether they make the trial on themselves or on others. Many things come before them. Many things claim their energy and their interest. Many things of this world are forced upon them as duties, and so become things, not of the world, but of God. Still all these are distractions. The force of the hand bends the bow; but it returns to its original form when the violence is taken away. To them life is a matter of one fact, and all truths resolve themselves into one, and that is, the immense worthiness of God to be loved: and it seems as if a necessity were laid upon them to see that He should be infinitely loved even by finite creatures. The few and scanty gleanings of the world are soon gathered in by the activity of love; and few and scanty they seem for all they are so beautiful and great; and then, as I said before, they put away the circumstances of life, or they leave them, as a bee leaves a rifled flower, and surround themselves with God's great works in the spiritual creation, that they may joy over all the abyss of complacency His love and glory have decreed to find therein. And not to speak of the first act of Mary's love in the womb of Anne, nor of the first unutterable moment of the Soul of Jesus in the Incarnation, there are two acts of love in Adam's mysterious life which these good souls love to ponder, because they are at once so high and yet seem to come so near to themselves and within reach of their own capacities.

One is the first act of love which Adam made at the moment his glorious soul was breathed by God into his body. To take the measure of this act of love, we must consider the sublimity of the gifts with which Adam was endowed. Are the hearts even of saints as large as his was then, where sin never was nor the evil of self-love, nor the littleness of selfish imperfection? Immaculate as Mary, to whom alone of all his descendants he can be compared, he stood before God upon the unsullied virgin earth. Creation was not beautiful enough for him. A special paradise had to be planted for him by God's own hand. He was the result of a solemn council of the Most Holy Trinity. His nature was beautiful in its perfection, but it was clothed by the surpassing beauty of primeval grace and the radiance of original justice. The greatness of his science was such that we hardly form an idea of it to ourselves, and the most startling miracles of the Saints are but feeble indications and partial recoveries of that rightful and supernatural dominion over nature which he possessed and exercised. The angels had fallen, one-third of the whole multitude, and Adam had come in the place of them, although in Jesus he had been decreed before them. That nature was created which from all eternity the Eternal Word had predestinated to take upon Himself. Adam was fashioned on the idea of Jesus; and Adam was to be the ancestor of Jesus, when the fulness of time should come. He was equal, God's works always are, to the dignity of his place. He was worthy of the eminence on which he stood. But a moment before and he was nothing. Darkness, silence, senselessness, are only emblems of the utter nothing out of which at the beck of God the soul of the first man

sprang forth. And how in the strength and health and magnificence of that first consciousness, his first act was one of almost immeasureable love of God, whom he knew, saw, loved, enjoyed, as one could who was adorned with senses of body, affections of heart and faculties of understanding such as none other of his descendants ever had until his sinless daughter Mary. Who can rightly imagine the gush of that first fresh heart? Who can fathom the depths of that new, thrilling, sinless life? Who can guess the heights of the exultation of that living breath of God just burningly breathed forth by His creative love; for by those heights alone can we measure the astonishing depths of Adam's spirit of prostrate adoration? How much was there, in that act of love, of reparation for the clouded part of the fallen angels? How much of promise for the futurity of this new and especially beloved creation? Enough that Adam's was the first act of love that was, if not in magnitude at least in human shape and kind, the same as those crowning, those alone sufficing acts, which God's glory was one day to have in countless millions from the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This was the first act of Adam newly justified by the gift of original justice simultaneous with his creation, and by that supernatural love, which created the first copy of the predestinated Humanity of Jesus, not in a state of nature, but in a state of grace. We think of Adam's fall, should we always be forgetting Adam's love, the first human love which the goodness of God vouchsafed so dearly to seek and so tenderly to prize?

Was God less wonderful, less desirable, less unfathomable to Adam when he knew Him, and had studied Him, and had left His blessings multiplied upon Him, than He

was in the first moment of his creation? Surely the inexhaustible riches of God and the far-reaching intelligence of Adam, and his rapid, exuberant growth in grace up to the fatal moment of sin, may all equally answer the question for us. But he had fallen. Now, if ever man knew the grievousness of sin, it was Adam who had once been sinless. If ever human heart could approach to the agony of that Sacred Heart which so miraculously drove the Blood away from itself under the olives of Gethsemane, it was the wise and hitherto immaculate heart of Adam. Did he know that God was merciful? Yes! for he knew that creation is itself mercy's eldest daughter; for God can exercise no mercy inside Himself, neither can He be aught but merciful outside. But there was no type of mercy for sin. There was everything against the thought, Adam's was not the first sin. The angels had sinned before him; and awful beyond expression had been their visitation. Not a moment was granted for a second thought. The act of rebellion and the lightning from the face of God seem to be but one act, so closely the one followed on the other. Worlds of intellectual beauty, creations of spiritual magnificence, abysses of wisdom and science and deep vision, strongholds of majestic power, multitudinous possibilities of glory and worship and love, and for each single one of these countless spirits there was the Creator's intense yearning to preserve and beautify and love them, and yet, not one instant of doubt, not one gesture of forbearance, He crushed, blighted, ruined, swept over the battlements of heaven into the abyss of hell, the whole of that marvellous ocean of teeming life and intellect. The zealous angels who stood firm interceded not. They had never seen an intercessor. They

unsheathed the swords of their keen spirits, flung themselves simply into the majestic dispositions of God's holy and chaste anger, and fought against their brethren, exulting to seal the work of their eternal ruin, all-loving as they were, because the All-Holy would have it so. The Eternal Word caught not at the wretched spirits as they fell. The breath of His mouth was to them, not the sweetness of repeated pardon, of reiterated absolution, but it was the fire of utter and hopeless desolation.

This was the mystery that Adam knew of. He knew it far better than we, and could fathom it more deeply, and characterise it more wisely and more truly. Now he had fallen himself, and from so great a height, and in spite of a grace so wonderful, and under a legislation so light. If God spared not His first rational creation when it frustrated His gracious purposes, what likelihood that He would spare His second, which had sinned under circumstances so aggravated? There was no such beauty as the angels had, that God should pardon Adam on that score. Numbers could not plead for him; for he and Eve stood alone, and God had but to cast them into hell, and create another man and another woman who should serve Him more loyally and with greater nobility. Not a tree or flower, not a gentle singing bird or painted moth need be scared or scathed. What more easy to the divine power? What more likely for the divine justice? What more compatible even with the divine goodness? Think how all this rushed on the mind of Adam, with so much more force than it does on ours. But he was a copy of the predestinated Jesus, and that saved him. The Lamb had been slain before the foundation of the world, and the Blood was ready, and that justified him. He was for-

given. Surely it must have required a miracle of omnipotence to keep him alive, just as it needed one to hinder Mary's broken heart from being her death at the foot of the bloody cross.

There was a new creation. There was a grace which had never been before, the grace of contrition; and his second act of love, which was the first of all acts of contrition, must also have surpassed his first act, when his immaculate soul came out of nothing and lay in adoring love at the feet of its Creator. Glorious as had been its knowledge of God before, it must really have seemed to him as if he had known Him not at all, such new depths of perfection, such breadths of incomprehensible mercy, had now been opened to him. But why more words? We cannot tell how Adam loved, it was so tremblingly, so intensely, so unutterably. Yet of his two loves, I would dare to think his first, when he stood justified by original justice, was less than his second, when, his fresh unexpected pardon more overwhelming him now than his recent creation overpowered him then, he stood before God justified a second time, and justified from sin by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ.

And yet perhaps we should not say that this last was greater than the first; but rather that to us it is more touching and more intimate, as the things of penance concern us more nearly than the things of innocence; and the idea of God, which a soul forgiven possesses, must be of a different kind from that which a beautiful unfallen being entertains of His ever blessed Majesty. The first act of Adam's love in the bright morning of his creation reminds us rather of Mary's first act of love, and the first moment of the Incarnation. It is a mystery to be ad-

mired. It is a joy that such an act of love should have been made to God, one which comprised so much that was for His greatest glory. Whereas Adam's second act was the father of thousands of similar acts of love which are being daily made by justified sinners, though they are far below it in heroism and intensity. There is not a soul to-day, which has departed from the countless confessionals of Christendom unclothed of the disgrace and guilt of mortal sin, but has made an act of love of God, of wondering praise and humble gratitude, of which that act of Adam was the first beginning, the original model and exemplar. It is the first parent of all our acts of contrition, and therefore venerable in our eyes. Then was the first creation of that grace tenderer than all other graces that had gone before it, whose secret vehemence is in the pulses of the Precious Blood, the grace by which we ourselves live and pray and hope and love all the days of our lives. What wonder that it should be more to us than the planting of Eden, or the ordaining of the sun and moon and stars? It was a greater work of God.

But how shall we compare the mystery of Transubstantiation with this grand work of the justification of a sinner, that work which, though greater far than the creation of a million worlds, is of hourly occurrence in this thankless earth of ours? We feel that Transubstantiation is of a far higher character. It leads us into a region of loftier and heavenlier things: and the operations of God in it are of a more delicate and spiritual kind. But if we consider the work of justification in a doctrinal point of view, we shall perceive that it is in an especial sense the work of the Sacraments. Either they effect our justification directly, or they confer it indirectly, or they con-

firm and complete it, or they sustain and preserve it, or they keep it bright and radiant, or they develop it into a higher work, or they create the fountains of sacramental power, causing them in the sacrament of Order to spring forth from the dry rocks of the hearts of men. Thus there is a special connection and a peculiar term of comparison between the Blessed Sacrament and the Mystery of justification, which last is so sacramental an act that, even when effected without the intervention of a proper Sacrament, it is not effected without the implicit desire for the Sacraments which are its rightful channels. Now if there is one dignity of the blessed Eucharist which is more undeniable than another, it is that it is the queen of sacraments. No others can compare with it; for while the others bring us the precious gifts of Jesus, this brings us what is unspeakably more precious, Jesus, God and Man, Himself. In the others there are special graces; in this, the fountain of grace Himself. Nay, it was the only Sacrament which He Himself could receive, the only one which He did receive, and with longing and desire did He receive it. How ineffable must be its dignity! But the Holy Eucharist does not overtop the other sacraments merely by the supereminence of its prerogatives. It surpasses them in that it comprises in itself the special excellences of all the rest. It has in it the faith of Baptism, with the fortitude of Confirmation. The purity of Penance is but the preparation for it, and the union of Marriage the figure of it, and the balm of Extreme Unction is as the kiss of those Lips which the Eucharist contains, and it is itself the Sacrifice for which the sacrament of Order is established. Thus justification is one of the most glorious works of God's omnipotence, one

of the most supernatural inventions of His wisdom, one of the most attractive miracles of His love. But the Blessed Sacrament is not so much a work, as it is the omnipotent, the wise, and loving Worker and Justifier Himself, hidden beneath veils to whose texture go more omnipotence, more wisdom, and more love than to the mystery of a sinner's justification. Thus it has all the work, and more than the work, of justification, and it is the Divine Worker and Justifier Himself besides.

SECTION VII.

THE BEAUTY OF GLORY AND THE BEAUTY OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

THE beauty of a justified soul is hidden from the bodily eye. Even the understanding is only able to appreciate it very faintly, and by its consequences, rather than as it is in itself. We know that it is a change from spiritual death to life, from the anger of God to His intense complacency, and that it has already in itself the germs of heaven which death alone is needed to develop. Hence we infer its transcending beauty. Nay, even our Christian discernment does not appreciate it, as it deserves to be appreciated. We still feel personal antipathies and repulsions, such as are possibly without sin or damage to charity, for souls which we believe to have been now justified. This alone proves that we do not so clearly discern the spiritual beauty of a justified soul as that it should instantaneously overbear all past associations and repugnances, and turn them, as it does with God, into positive and abounding love. But if the beauty of justification is hidden in its plenitude, even from saints, what

shall we say of the beauty of that other work of God, the Glorification of the Just? If it be true that he was the frequent companion of the Boy of Nazareth, long years had St. John the Evangelist been conversant with Jesus. As the novice of the Baptist, he had gazed with love and awe upon his master's form of sanctity, solitary, austere, silent, a growth of the wilderness, of miraculous loneliness, of astonishing abstinence, of companionship with the wild beasts, and of familiarity with the angels Then he had passed into that other school of Jesus. He had seen the beauty of His actions, and the celestial loveliness of His life and conversation. He had felt himself many a time breathless and absorbed in the mere atmosphere of sanctity which encompassed him round about. He had climbed Tabor, and had shaded his dazzled eyes from the white light of the Transfiguration. Yet, even to his beauty-practised eye, so glorious was the beatified spirit of an angel that he was fain, as he tells us in the Apocalypse, to fall down before his feet and worship him. Well might St. Philip, as a vision faded from him, say that words could not tell the beauty of a soul that has died in a state of grace. Think of the stains that are washed out of it, of the marks of grace that furrow it, of the sacramental characters that are impressed upon it, of the lineaments of the soul of Jesus that are reflected in it. Count up the imperfections and infirmities that are annihilated in it, or rather that have bloomed into th opposite graces and perfections. Measure its new powers, its height and breadth and depth of science, vision, immortality and love, and above all its safe immutability, which no intrinsic faculty, but the beaming Face of the Vision ensures to it now. Picture the infused habits and

engrafted virtues, that were so beautiful, so indescribable in the saint on earth, and which have now broken out in refulgent blossoms for which earth's language has no names, and whose odour may inebriate the spirits of angelic choirs themselves. See how it traverses vast regions of the Divine Perfections, not open to the ken of mortal scholarship, how it sounds the depths, and bathes itself in the light, and drinks of the beauty, and seems as though it were itself magnified to a grandeur resembling His who has clothed it with Himself! And can this be our own soul, the same soul which we knew to be so poor, so little, so weakly, so limited in its range, so untrustworthy in its resolutions, so feeble in its perseverance, so ignoble a lover of itself? Calculate, and allow for, the mighty action of the cleansing fires of purgatory for centuries and centuries if you will: yet even then, what must the majesty of that process be, which can make so marvellous a change?

But the work is not yet complete. The Body has to be glorified as well. The corruptible has to dawn into incorruptibility, the mortal to put on immortality. The four superb gifts of our glorified bodies, of which theology speaks, what are they, but almost a new nature to us? Certainly a new mode of being. What is impassibility to him who has forgotten in the long years what the abounding sense of robust health is like, and who has weakness in every limb, and a pain in every nerve, and a langour in every sense, and a head that aches always? What is charity to the age-worn face, to the care-marked brow, to the pain-dulled eye? What is agility to our slow, toiling, contracted, imprisoned efforts, but as if a portion of God's omnipotence had been imparted to us?

What is subtlety to us, but as if we had been called to enjoy with God the privilege of His immensity, the secret of His omnipresence? Look at the whole world to-day, unroll the chronicles of its past history, and see the might of sensual pleasure, and the enormous revolutions, physical, moral, and intellectual, which its bewildering intoxication has brought about: and reflect, that as the worm is to the seraph, so are our souls here, their keenness, delicacy, spirituality, intensity of delight, compass of objects, rapidity of transition, permanence of impressions, to what they will be when they have burst the hampering ligaments of mortality, and are developed in the mystery of a glorious resurrection. Language will hardly help us to ideas here, because all these things stretch out so far beyond our present comprehension. They belong to another world, to another state of being, to the Glorification of the Just. How lovely must the soul be which is modelled on the Soul of Jesus, how glorious the body of which His is the exemplar and the type! And all this, leaving out of account that one gift, which when we think of it casts all the rest into the shade, the rapturous all-sufficient Vision of the Undivided Trinity! It needs only that death should find us in a state of grace, and that to one benign touch of his cold wand, we should superadd or not, as the case may be, the sifting action of the purgatorial fires, and all this unutterably heavenly work is accomplished in ourselves. Oh nothing makes us feel the likelihood of our being lost, so much as realizing the grandeur of being saved!

O dear mystery of Glory! why do we not call thee to mind more often than we do? Surely we stand in need of it. How weary we grow in well-doing. What a

strange life is the spiritual life; to overcome one obstacle is only a guarantee that a worse one will be given us to overcome; labour leads to labour and away from rest. A temptation vanquished is only a miraculous multiplication of temptations; and the devils, like the flies, come in greater crowds the more we beat them away. How long can we go on? It seems desperate, an affair of moments, like the struggles of a drowning man to keep himself on the surface. The longer we persevere the more impossible does perseverance seem. Of many things it may be true that the first blow is half the battle; who will dare to say it is so with the spiritual life? Yet sometimes we turn from the thought of glory as if it were a selfish and unworthy thought, a not loving God for His own sake, nor an exclusive seeking of His sole glory. But is this wisdom? Is it humility? Alas! who has not found out that they who talk most of the necessity of bodily mortifications, are just those who practise fewest of them? So they who would have nought but disinterested love and perfect self-oblivion, as an abiding and habitual state, and who cast away the hope of glory as too low for them, an imperfect motive, a reflection upon God, too often fall so much lower still, that sometimes it would have been well for them if they had kept to the humble and restraining fear of hell. Not such was the lowly wisdom of the Psalmist, I have inclined my heart to perform Thy justifications for ever, because of the retribution! Set but the thought of heaven to fight with the sight of earth, and we ourselves in our inmost souls shall have peace to think of God.

But it is time for us to compare this mystery of Glorification with that of Transubstantiation; and if we look

at the parts which compose the former, we shall see that the latter possesses them all, and further, that it possesses them in a more excellent way, and further still, that it possesses them with circumstances which greatly enhance its value and heighten its beauty as a work of God. For what is the soul of the greatest saint, or even of the prince of the apostles, or still more, of the Immaculate Mother herself, compared with the Human Soul of Jesus, so peculiarly present in the Blessed Sacrament? Of all glorified souls His is the king and first-born. Whatsoever of beauty, of wisdom, of power, of holiness, can be predicated of any soul, or of all souls together in glory, must be said of His multiplied a thousand fold, and even then its highest excellencies would remain unsaid. So among the glorified bodies of His servants, those few that may have been raised to glory already, and those multitudes that shall be raised at the last day, can any compare with His, which possesses not only all the gifts of glorified bodies in the highest degree, but has those five beautiful and sunlike wounds, as so many peculiar fountains of incomparable sweetness and attraction, and is as it were translucent and radiant with the beauty of the Eternal Word? Nay, His Soul and His Body are the very models upon which ours are to be glorified when doomsday comes. It is the image of His Body into which we ourselves are to be transformed. And that Body and that Soul, with all the splendours of the plenitude of glory, are in the Blessed Sacrament. The object of the mystery of glory, the everlasting Godhead, the source of all beatitude, the cause of heavenly joys, that sea in which all the glorified live and love and rejoice for evermore, that too is in the Blessed Sacrament. The Vision of the Godhead, the

Beatific Vision, which is something separable from the Object seen and from the Soul that sees, — the Vision itself is also there; for the Soul of Jesus is enjoying it beneath the species. And when we remember that this Soul, Body, Godhead and Vision are all brought to us in this poor world, on this earth, before death, and at a mortal's word, by the mystery of Transubstantiation: and that through Holy Communion it is not merely outside of us, but inside us, by a union so close and intimate that it cannot adequately be expressed, who can doubt but that amid the glory of the works of God, where all are glorious, all supremely beautiful, the glory of Transubstantiation is greater than the glory of everlasting blessedness in Heaven? For what is that but saying, that His glory is more beautiful than ours?

Having thus ventured to compare these great works of God one with another, let me repeat the warning and the protest which I made at the beginning. Such an examination cannot be made, as if we could detect some flaw or imperfection in the works of God, or a method of operation which might have been more spiritual or more to the purpose. Although the liberty of God is not bound, as the optimists teach, to do everything in the most perfect way, it is certain that all His works are perfect, all of them complete, all of them admirable, and the least of them beyond our understanding. The very words of God are works, for they accomplish infallibly the ends whereto they are sent: and His works attain their precise effect with a fittingness which His infinite wisdom alone can appreciate. It is a consequence of God's immensity that with Him there is no such thing as great and small, because all things are without measure in

Him. Thus when when we compare one work of God with another, it is not as if one cast the other into the shade, or as if we could do better without one than without another, or as if the brightness of one paled and faded away in the mastering light of another. Neither by instituting such a comparison do we pretend to suppose that we can exhaust the ends which God had in view in any particular work, or say that He had but one end in view, and that one end is commensurate with the entire work, or select one end out of many as the chief end at which God aimed, the primary object to which all others are secondary and subordinate. All this would be presumption, would be wanting in the deep reverence which all the vestiges of God are calculated to excite, and would be contrary to that spirit of adoration which all intelligent research into the divine ways necessarily brings along with it. All the external operations of God are doubtless marked by the same unity, which is the privilege of His interior life, as Three Persons and One God. One mystery grows out of another; they touch upon each other; they gravitate towards or revolve round each other. We cannot map them out, as we do the stars of heaven, and assign to each its fixed and proper path. If we endeavour to ascertain their influence upon each other, it is only because Holy Scripture and the Church furnish us with certain data to proceed upon. And as to their weight, we may weigh in our scales the bulk of the enormous sun, but never can we weigh the bulk of the least of God's external operations. The object therefore of all such comparisons is not so much to decide and dogmatize, as to teach ourselves, and to worship God while we are learning. We look at the divine mysteries from

such points of view as are open to us. We apply our own methods of reasoning to them, our own standards, measures, quantities, canons; and holding fast to the analogy of faith, we seem by all this investigation to obtain a clearer idea of God's works, fresh grounds for loving Him, and more intelligent methods of devotion. Tradidit mundum disputationibus, says the Wise Man; and in like manner as He gave over to our disputations His material creation, so in Catholic theology has He invited us to the far more sublime discussion of His spiritual creation.* But it must be in no light spirit that we venture on such a comparison. It must be our delight to stand by the side of God, and watch Him work in the fields of nature, grace, and glory. Yet while the benignant skill and affectionate provision of our compassionate Father move us many times to tears of burning love, it is the spirit of adoration which reigns as supremely as love itself over our hearts and understandings. The neighbourhood of God, the wonder of His ways, the magnitude of His operations, the awfulness of His peaceful and unstraining labour, the way in which unpliant matter, or resisting spirits, or unproductive nothingness, flow into His Hands, silent, obedient, ready, the all-holy presidency of unutterable justice over all he does,—these things seem almost to annihilate us, almost to reduce us into the void from which He once lovingly evoked us. Vain thoughts and rash words and frivolous judgments all stand rebuked in the presence of the Most High; and after all, when even our thoughts have been adoration, and our words prayers, and our judgments thanksgivings,

* See the motto from Plato's Epinomis at the beginning of the volume.

we can never speak of God and of His ways but, when we have done, we are fain to kneel down and implore Him to forgive us for the curiosity of our eyes and the presumption of our words. In this way let us close our present enquiry; for when we love, we love Him so unworthily, and when we praise, we praise Him so ungracefully, that our very love and praise themselves stand in need of his fatherly compassion.

We may now sum up the results of this Book, and see what progress we have made. We have first of all examined the various works of God and the admirable multitude of His external operations, as He has been pleased Himself to manifest them in His Church, His Word, and His World. From these, their diversities, their similitudes, and their obviously divine unity, there have resulted certain canons of the beautiful and the sublime in the operations of the Divine Artist; and while these are drawn from the whole assemblage of the works of the Almighty, we can apply them again to each of his masterpieces, in order to determine, not so much the perfection, as the character of their beauty. The result has been the discovery that the mystery of Transubstantiation satisfies in itself each one of these canons, unites in itself every one of them, and fulfils them all in the most excellent way and to the highest degree. But this was not enough for our purpose. We then selected those great and characteristic works of God, which seem necessary in addition to His own intrinsic perfections to complete the idea of Him which we have in our minds; such as Creation, Incarnation, Justification, Glorification, and Transubstantiation. We examined

each of them separately; and Transubstantiation, as our proper subject, at considerable length and with great minuteness; and then comparing these five works together, it seemed as if each of them had a characteristic excellence of its own; that Transubstantiation met each of them in the matter of this very excellence and overpassed them; that thus it united in itself, and in itself surpassed, all the characteristic excellences of the other four, and finally remained with peculiar prerogatives of its own to which the other works of God afforded not so much as a parallel. The enquiry was an interesting one in itself, as it led us to follow Catholic theologians through many fruitful questions and discussions, and filled us full of new love, admiration, and devotion for divine things, as it seemed to multiply and magnify the Hand of God whichever way we turned. But our chief object was to lay an intelligent basis for a great and seraphic devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. It was to win greater confidence, even if for the while it fatigued your attention; and it was to prepare you to receive hereafter strong language and glowing description, as in reality the moderate expression of doctrinal sobriety, the unavoidably cold under-statement of the real truth, and not as the mere pardonable rhetoric of devotional exaggeration.

In one word, what is the upshot of it all? The Blessed Sacrament is God. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is simply divine worship. Turn it which way we will, throw the light of love and knowledge now on one side of it, now on another, still the result is the same, the one inexhaustible sweet fact, the Real Presence. In the hands of the priest, behind the crystal of the

monstrance, on the tongue of the communicant, now, and for a thousand times, and almost at our will and pleasure, there are the Hands and Feet, the Eyes and Mouth, the swift Blood and living Heart of Him whom Thomas touched and Magdalen was fain to touch, the Soul that delighted Limbus with its amazing beauty and set the prisoners free, nay the Eternal, Incomprehensible, Almighty Word who is everywhere and yet fixed there, the flashing fires of whose dear glory we could not bear to see, and so for love of us He stills them and He sheathes them in the quiet modesty of the Blessed Sacrament.

BOOK II.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT THE DEVOTION OF CATHOLICS.

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SECTION I.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT THE SUBJECT OF A SPECIAL DEVOTION.

It may seem at first sight strange, and not altogether respectful, to the Real Presence of our Blessed Lord in His great Sacrament to number it among the subjects of a special devotion. For a special devotion, in the sense in which spiritual writers use the words, means that, from a natural turn of mind, or from certain associations with the secret history of our souls, or from the peculiar attraction of divine grace, we are drawn to particular mysteries of our Lord's life, or particular attributes of God, or particular angels and saints, rather than to others. It is intelligible that an active professional man should experience greater sweetness in meditating on our Lord's public ministry than on His hidden life in the holy house of Nazareth. The examples come more home to him and are more readily applied to his own trials and difficulties in the discharge of public duties. While the nun,

the seminarist, or one who from any cause is leading a retired life, goes to the house of Nazareth as, to such persons at least, a fresher and a fuller fountain of consolation, encouragement and strength, some for the moment, like Peter, seem to prefer Thabor to Calvary, which is an instance of an indiscreet special devotion. Some prefer Bethlehem to Calvary, and as the cross is equally in both, this is an example of a legitimate and safe special devotion. A virgin saint is more to some minds than a martyr; and there are those who prefer a doctor of the Church to both. All this is intelligible, even when it concerns the choice and preference of certain mysteries of the Incarnation over others. But how is it at all rightly applicable to the Blessed Sacrament, which is nothing else than Jesus Himself in the veils which He has chosen? This surely we may say is rather a part of the direct universal worship of God, than the lawful subject of a special devotion. We do not directly worship the Visitation, or the Finding in the Temple, or the Agony in the Garden; but we do directly worship the Blessed Sacrament, as the living God Himself in mystic veils. How then can we speak of persons having a special devotion to the Blessed Sacrament; by which we do not simply mean that they are distinguished themselves by an unusual amount of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament; but that it is their special devotion?

A very little consideration will suffice to explain the difficulty. The adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is truly part of the direct universal worship of God which is paid to Him by the faithful. In the daily Sacrifice of the Mass, in the receiving of Holy Communion, and in the proper observant homage of His Sacramental Pre-

sence in Churches, this worship is bound by the Church on the consciences of her children; and Benediction has now become to the people almost what choir is to religious, or the divine office to the clergy. And this worship and homage is of course not included under the idea of a special devotion. It is something which every one must have, which every one must do, else is he a rebel, a renegade, or a heretic. It belongs to Catholic dutifulness. It is a necessary part of the profession of Christian faith, and of the homage which the instructed reason of the creature owes to the majesty and presence of his Creator, wheresoever they are revealed to him.

But as it is a kindred mystery to the Incarnation and almost a part of it, or rather its very complement, there is another view which may be taken of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament; according to which view it may be truly and reverently regarded as the subject of what we call a special devotion. For example, some persons can keep themselves in the presence of God anywhere, in their own rooms or in the crowded streets, as well as in Church and before the tabernacle. The Blessed Sacrament does not seem to be necessary to their devout recollections or to the fervour of their prayers. At the time, the fact of their being in Church does not seem to exercise any discernible influence on their devotion. Others again find the utmost difficulty in praying well anywhere except before the Blessed Sacrament. Prayer is quite another thing to them when they are in church. However much outward duties and distractions, or internal conflicts and struggles, may have caused them to lose the sensible presence of God, they are no sooner before our Lord than they are calmed almost without their own co-

operation; all disquietude is allayed, and the spirit of prayer triumphantly resumes its happy empire over their minds. The Blessed Sacrament is to the latter class of people something which it is not to the former, and yet the former may be in a far higher spiritual condition. Again, some persons will by preference say mass at an altar where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved; because they find themselves so much more fervent and recollected there. Others will by preference say mass where it is not reserved, because they realize our Lord's Sacramental Presence with such an absorbing intensity of faith that it disturbs them, makes it difficult for them to observe with the proper calm attention the minute ceremonies and rubrics of the mass, and hinders for the moment their realizing the Sacrifice. Others, again, experience a distinct loss of sensible devotion at High Mass or in great functions, because the lights, incense, vestments, and actions of the sacred ministers, combined with the tumult of the music, seem to disturb and disarrange the quiet supremacy of the Tabernacle. While multitudes of excellent persons experience none of these three things. Obviously these are three modes in which a special devotion to the Blessed Sacrament variously discloses itself. Again, there are some, with a really tender and intense devotion to the Passion, who actually do not know what to do with themselves on Good Friday, because there is no Blessed Sacrament, and whose minds are occupied less with the mystery of our Lord's death, or the expectation of His resurrection, than by the thought of the many sacristies in which the Blessed Sacrament is lying hid, to be ready as viaticum for those in their agony. Their thoughts are haunting these hiding-places, with a feeling

of almost perverse devotion,* seeing that the Church so studiously withdraws them from our homage and our gaze. Sometimes members of a community, from which the Blessed Sacrament is temporarily withdrawn for some unavoidable reason, feel so unhinged that the observances of their rule, or the practices of penance, or even acts of obedience which do not appear to have so much as a remote connection with the Blessed Sacrament, are almost impossible, or require an absurdly disproportioned effort, just as a family goes wrong in slight things when its master is away. While in the same community others are merely deploring one means of grace suspended, one spiritual exercise intermitted.

To some the Crucifix is almost cold, because the Blessed Sacrament is so completely their all in all. Others feel as if in some hidden way all their devotion to our dear and holy Mother arose out of the Blessed Sacrament and returned into it again. Some saints and great contemplatives have shaped their whole lives upon an imitation of the abasements of the Blessed Sacrament. Others, in a more simple and unmystical expression of their love, have bound themselves by vow to do all they can to promote the knowledge and love of this great Sacrament, and have devoted their time, talents and energies to this end in a more common-place way. Some families of the spouses of Christ live only to make reparation to our Lord for the indignities committed against that one manifestation of His mercy and hidden majesty. Several give all the indulgences they gain to the soul that in lifetime had most devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. To some God

* B. Paul of the Cross used to spend part of his Good Friday in the secret chapel before the Blessed Sacrament.—Life, vol. ii., p. 198.

has given the gift of discerning by a feeling in their soul where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, to others of detecting by the taste a consecrated from an unconsecrated Host, and to others of being led to the tabernacle of our Hidden Love by the smell of His indescribable fragrance. The predestination of some, as of the Martyrs of Gorcum, was that they should lay down their lives for the Blessed Sacrament. Some have been communicated by our Lord Himself, others by angels; others see visions and beautiful apparitions in the Host; others receive our Lord through their flesh, in the same way as He passed with His glorified Body through closed doors after the Resurrection. This was the privilege of St. Juliana Falconieri. Others are raised up to make revelations to the Church about it, as the feast of Corpus Christi was revealed through St. Juliana of Retinne, just at a time when the insidious poison of secret infidelity and Ghibelline irreligion was ravaging the world; as if infidelity made supernatural demonstrations on the part of the Church all the more seasonable, contrary to the ideas of human prudence, just as it has pleased God to confront the unbelief of our own day by the definition of the Immaculate Conception. Others have their natural life nourished and sustained by the Blessed Sacrament, like St. Philip, and many servants of God. It was given to St. Pascal Baylon, that his dead body should teach this devotion, by knocking in its coffin whenever the Host was elevated in the Church where it was. These were the famous Colpi di San Pasquale about which so much has been said and written.

All these are so many developments and disclosures of a special devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, which are plainly quite different from the direct and necessary

worship of it which is an essential part of the Christian religion, and cannot be confounded with the devotion. They are badges and tokens which distinguish particular good persons from the great multitude of the good. At the least they show a particular turn of mind, a particular taste in devotion, an unusual delight in and apprehension of particular doctrines, an intelligent significant choice in sacred things, or the influence of the spiritual genius of a confessor and director. But far more often they indicate a secret but undeniable attraction of the Holy Ghost, or it would almost seem sometimes an almost magnetic* attraction from our dearest Lord Himself beneath His sacramental veils. And this has often begun, and grown up, and almost stereotyped a man's whole spiritual life, before he was aware of it; the very attraction partaking of the secresy which characterizes the mystery itself. Thus a preacher once acknowledged that he had made a rule to himself never to preach a sermon without mentioning our Lady in it; and it was very seldom that he missed of doing so, in season or out of season. He was surprised when a friend told him that many persons were noticing that he never preached, on whatever subject, without bringing on the Blessed Sacrament, and grafting allusions to it in the matter in hand; though he himself had never been aware of it, until it was pointed out to him. What had seemed to others almost an affectation was to himself quite unknown; and so strongly was the habit formed in his mind that the knowledge of it became in time to come a positive constraint. All this will illustrate the position not only that there may be such a thing

* The phenomena of the Blessed Sacrament as the Magnet of souls will be considered in the Fourth Book.

as a special devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, in the technical sense of those words, but that it exists, as a specialty with abundantly various manifestations, in the Church. The Blessed Sacraments, besides being the object of the divine worship due to God, takes rank with and above the Infancy, the Passion, the Precious Blood, the Sacred Heart, the Five Wounds, and the Immaculate Mother, as the subject of a Catholic special devotion; and it is in this light we are to consider it in the present Book.

Special devotions, whether they spring from a natural turn of mind and a peculiar bent of disposition, or from the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, in both cases alike, though not equally so, exercise an important sway over the whole spiritual life. It is quite true that the varied riches of the Catholic devotion, as it were, allure our souls to God, and fix their restlessness, while they also satisfy that desire for change, and turn aside that weariness of uniformity, which are infirmities of our nature; infirmities pursuing us even into the sanctuary and meddling with our most intimate communications with God. But this is by no means the whole account of them, notwithstanding that such functions as have been named are of no slight consequence to our sanctification. Special devotions are something more than pious whims or a man's devotional idiosyncrasy. They have an inward life of their own, a strong hidden spirit, whereby they can impress a positive spiritual character, peculiar to themselves, upon our souls. They are more than the beauty of holiness; they are part of its life. They do not blossom only; they bring forth fruit, and that abundantly. It is very often difficult to find the intrinsic connection between themselves and the fruits they bear. It often eludes in-

tellectual discovery; but the fact that there is such a connection is not the less certain, and all pious persons who look much into themselves are well aware of its existence. We know a plant by its leaf and form and the tint of its foliage, and we know from past experience whether its yet unopened buds will be yellow, red or blue in blossom, and we often wonder at the hidden virtue which makes plants of the same family at once so various and so uncertain in the colour of their tints, and in the distribution of the patches of colour. Just so it is with special devotions. They are of much more importance in manufacturing saints, than outward circumstances for the most part are. Indeed in the case of the greatest number of contemplative saints they have the work all to themselves. One devotion produces one kind of a saint, another devotion another; and a mixture of devotions equally represents in the developments of holiness the proportions of those which composed it. God has given to one devotion to convey one grace, to concur in the formation of one habit of virtue, or to lead to one kind of prayer; while others are equally but differently gifted in all these respects. Thus, in those many cases in which no particular attraction of grace seems to be discernible, it forms no unimportant part of spiritual direction to guide pious souls judiciously in the choice of their devotions, and to enable them to extract from each devotion, as bees draw honey from the flavours of the flowers, that particular spirit with which God has been pleased to endow it. The first question to be asked about any devotion concerns the spirit which it conveys to the soul, the grace it has received for its own, the character, like a sacramental character which it impresses and seals upon our

entire spiritual life. If then the Blessed Sacrament be the subject of a special devotion, we must first discern its spirit, before we can fall in love with its beauty, or give ourselves up to the effects of its power.

The spirit of the Blessed Sacrament is plainly two-fold, according as we look at the Sacrifice or the Sacrament. The spirit of the sacrifice is without doubt the spirit of Calvary, for it is a renewal of the mysteries of the Passion, and it is itself the very same Sacrifice. But this is hardly the subject with which we are concerned. It is true that in one sense of the words persons may have a special devotion, meaning thereby a peculiarly great one, to the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass; but it is scarcely true that, in the other sense of the words, the Mass can be the subject of a separate special devotion to Catholics. It enters too much into our duties, obligations, and the essence of the whole system of the Christian religion, which is eminently a religion of Sacrifice. It is the spirit of sacrifice which creates the Church, maintains it, multiplies it, holds it together, and circulates through its veins as its life's blood. Sacrifice is the key to the difficulties of its dogmas; it is the soul of its mysteries, the cause of its asceticism, the pattern of its mystical unions with God. Ritual is the action of sacrifice, prayer is the language of sacrifice, contemplation is the thought of sacrifice, and interior mortification is sacrifice itself. Sacrifice is to the Church what the soul is to the body; it is whole in the whole body, and whole in every part of the body, and whatever part of the body has ceased to be informed by it, has thereby ceased to be a living part of the body at all. Where there is no Mass, there is also no Christianity. Wherever we turn there is sacrifice. The

outward life of the Church is nothing but a glorious and unmistakeable preaching of sacrifice: the papacy is itself only an incessant, continuous, unflinching martyrdom. To the discerning eye, the Church has never left the catacombs, or if it has, it has been only to seek for new ways of suffering, as St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi* says that our Lord finding all delights in heaven, save the jewelled stole of suffering, left heaven and the bosom of the Father and came on earth to seek it. If we penetrate into the inner life of the Church, her solitudes of divine union, her peopled deserts of silent love, her cloisters of vowed and supernatural loveliness, the further in we penetrate the more do we discover that it is nothing but a concentration, a transformation, a spiritualising, of sacrifice. All this lies in the vital force and omnipotent energy of the Mass. That far reaching Sacrifice is everywhere, and does everything for every one. It belongs therefore too much to the existence of the Church to be the subject of what we call a special devotion, one of many, something which can be compared with other things, a shining mystery with other mysteries shining round about it. The wants of souls are almost infinitely various; some have the grace to feel the want of much, and to be ever wanting more; others unhappily want little, and can be contented with almost less; but just as the running stream fills the vessels, great or small, which are dipped into its abundance, and just as the sun gives full light to the various powers of vision of different men and animals,

* On her death-bed St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi uttered the following words; "Sappiate che l'esercitio del patire é cosa tanto pregiata e nobile, che il Verbo trovandosi nel Seno del suo eterno Padre, abbondantissimo di richezze e delitie di Paradiso, perchè non era ornato della *stola del patire, venne in terra per questo ornamento;* e questo era Dio e non si potea ingannare."

so it is with the Mass. It is coextensive with the wants of all, embraces all, satisfies all, stimulates all. Our all is there, our bread for the day, our viaticum for the journey to eternity. It is enough if the daily Sacrifice of the Mass cease, for the Church at once to fall on those unutterable latter days when Antichrist shall persecute and reign. Laws against Mass, insults to it, inabilities to bequeath foundations for it, all these are of the essence of persecution. In the same way that all souls are equal, so Mass is equal to all; and in the same way that every degree of mental power and glorious giftedness, from the sublimest intelligence of the theologian to the limited understanding of the peasant, is secured and sustained, as much as it wants and no more, by the immortal soul, so the broad edifice of the Saint's sanctity and the small beginnings of the sinner's efforts have all they want, and no more, in the sacrifice of the Mass. The adorable Sacrifice fills all spiritual depths and shallows; it is its gift that it should fill wherever it is; fulness is its prerogative. Hence its character does not admit of its being precisely the subject of a special devotion.

When we speak, therefore, of the Blessed Sacrament being the subject of a special devotion we mean, not the Sacrifice, nor the Communion, but the Sacramental Life of our Lord, the residence of Jesus amongst us under the mystic veils of the species. The presence of God is as it were the atmosphere of the spiritual life, and the practice of His Presence includes and combines all the practices of devotion; and just as God's putting on a visible nature in the Incarnation enabled men to picture Him to themselves and to avoid idolatry, so to many souls the practical though not absolute omnipresence of

the Sacred Humanity in the Blessed Sacrament supplies them with a practice of the Divine Presence, which in their case far surpasses what they could attain by endeavouring to realize the spiritual presence of God. The Blessed Sacrament does for the immensity of God, what the Incarnation does for His invisibility. It is this life of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament which is the subject of a special devotion

SECTION II.

THE SPIRIT OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

JESUS lives many lives in the Blessed Sacrament. In one sense He may be said to lead many exterior lives. For in each tabernacle where He is reserved, He meets with different treatment, performs different miracles of grace, receives different petitions of want and sorrow, abides a different length of time, and is the object of different degrees of love. There is in this sense what may be called an outward biography to every consecrated Host. But this is not what is meant by saying that Jesus lives many lives in the Blessed Sacrament. What is meant is interior, mystical, and of a spiritual character. His life in the Blessed Sacrament is different from the life He leads in heaven; it is under different conditions, and follows peculiar laws, according as He has willed it. His life is a state of mystical death. It is a life in which He foregoes the use of His human senses. In the adorable Host He does not see with His man's eyes, nor hear with His man's ears. He restrains all these things, and hushes Himself into a mystical death in order

that we may be the more fearless, though not the less reverent, in handling Him; the more familiar, though not the less humble, in approaching His mysterious Presence. But besides this, there are senses in which He leads in the Blessed Sacrament an active life and a contemplative life, a life of poverty and a life of divine riches, a life of suffering yet also a life of glory. As many states as there are in the spiritual life of the faithful, so many lives are there which He leads in the Blessed Sacrament. The apostolic missionary, the cloistered nun, the lonely hermit, the busy merchant, the prelate and the child, the fresh penitent and the experienced contemplative, behold Him in the manifold depths of His sweet Sacrament leading their lives, and winning them to Himself by a sympathy of state and occupations, so marked and decided as seemingly to exclude any others. While He is the pattern of all states, He seems to be the exclusive representative of none, just as His whole Passion was all for each one of us, while it was also all the while for the whole world. But we shall have occasion to return another time to these various lives in the Blessed Sacrament.* We have now to examine the peculiar spirit which devotion to these lives of Jesus gives out and impresses upon our souls.

The Blessed Sacrament was markedly instituted in commemoration of our Lord's Passion. The time and the circumstances of its first institution leave no doubt whatever upon the subject, even independently of the positive precept of commemorating the Passion thereby. The Mass is itself externally a sort of drama of the

* See Book IV.

Passion, and internally it is the identical Sacrifice perpetually and bloodlessly renewed. Yet, on the most superficial consideration of the matter, we cannot avoid being struck by the obvious analogies between the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacred Infancy; and when we come to examine it fully, we arrive at the conclusion, that while the spirit of the Sacrifice is the spirit of Calvary, the spirit of the Sacrament is the spirit of Bethlehem; and the whole character of the devotion resembles, as closely as two devotions can resemble each other, the Devotion to the Sacred Infancy. Let us now proceed first to establish the fact, next to discover reasons for it, and then to draw out the analogy at length.

We naturally look first to the language and practice of the Church. In the hymns and office for the octave of Corpus Christi we are continually being reminded of the Childhood of Jesus, in such a way as to show that the two mysteries were united in the mind of the composer. There is no proper Preface allotted to the masses of the Blessed Sacrament, but the Preface of the Nativity is borrowed, as if it were equally applicable to both. Passing from the conduct of the Church to the interior life of her children, we find the two devotions to the Blessed Sacrament and the Holy Infancy constantly united, and connected as it were naturally together. With certain differences the one seems to produce the same spiritual fruits as the other, to suggest corresponding devout exercises, and to lead to the same ascetical practices. Sister Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament, a Carmelitess of Beaune, whom God raised up to give such an impulse and fresh extension to the devotion to the Sacred Infancy, is a case in point. Her whole life illustrates

the connection which we are now considering. Indeed our Lord Himself seems to point to it by the manner in which He vouchsafes to appear to His saints and servants in the Blessed Sacrament. No one can be conversant with the lives of the Saints without being struck, not only by the similarity of nearly all these apparitions one with another, but also by their being almost uniformly apparitions of Him as an infant, with or without His Mother, and most commonly without her. There are instances of His appearing in the Host as He was after the Scourging, another time as crowned with thorns, another as carrying His Cross, and another as risen.* But these are quite the exceptions, and very rare ones. In almost every instance, when He vouchsafes to cheer or to instruct His saints by these visions, He appears as the Babe of Bethlehem, sometimes struggling as if in pain, and reluctant to be given to some one in Holy Communion, and sometimes imparting benediction to the assembled people. In that vast and various system of private revelations which our Lord condescends to make of Himself, His ways, and wishes, in the hidden wonders, the visions, dreams, locutions and extasies of the Saints, there is no fact more undeniable than this, nor more striking, from the frequency of its occurrence and the uniformity of its manifestations; and it clearly shows that the connection between the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacred Infancy is real and divine.

But if this remarkable phenomenon arrests our attention, we may venture also to search for the reasons of it. The very facts of the two mysteries present themselves

* See Book IV. for the functions of the Blessed Sacrament in the mystical life.

to our minds at the outset. The one seems to foreshow the other. The Blessed Sacrament appears to reflect in its own peculiar way every detail, however minute, of the Sacred Infancy. The Babe is born in Bethlehem, the "House of Bread," and born in a manger, as if to be the food of men, who through sin have become, in the Psalmist's words, as it were beasts in the sight of God. The altar and the manger are too full of parallels for any one to need to have them drawn out. The swaddling clothes of Bethlehem are the accidents of the Host. The Consecration in the Mass answers to the mystery of His Birth; and the various offices and familiarities of His priests with His Body are but so many renewals of the manifold ministrations, which He submitted to receive at the hands of His foster-father, St. Joseph. So that if we meditate, first on one and then on the other of these mysteries, we find the same trains of thought arising in our minds and the same aspirations forming on our lips. The method of the divine condescensions is the same in both cases. If we look at devotion to the Blessed Sacrament in a doctrinal point of view, we shall see why this is so. Although we cannot separate the Sacred Humanity from the Person of the Eternal Word, nor worship it apart from the Hypostatic Union,* it is nevertheless true that the worship of the Blessed Sacrament is peculiarly a worship and the highest worship, of

* The passage in the text is not meant to convey any opinion on the controverted question whether the Sacred Humanity can receive the cultus of hyper-dulia, even when considered apart from the Hypostatic Union. Suarez says it can; Vasquez that it cannot; and De Lugo that it can, *moraliter loquendo*, but that it may not, *non licere et non decere*. Suarez de Incar. Disp. 54. sect. 3. Vasquez. Disp. 96. De Lugo, Disp. 35. sect. 3. n. 55. præsertim.

the Sacred Humanity; because it is the Sacred Humanity which is prominently present in the Blessed Sacrament by the precise power of the words of consecration, while the Divinity is there, not by the force of consecration, but by concomitance, and so also is our Lord's Human Soul. Thus the Blessed Sacrament is in a special sense the Body and Blood of our dearest Lord. It is the Presence of His Sacred Humanity, and the peculiar theatre of its wonders.

If we compare devotion to the Passion with devotion to the Sacred Humanity, we shall see how this bears upon our subject. In the Passion our thoughts are occupied, not so much with the fact that our Lord is God and that He is man also, as with the intensity of His sufferings, or the beauty of his patience, or the liberality of His love, or the dreadfulness of sin, or the terrible consequences of the Father's wrath, or the horror of Jewish malice and our own. What Jesus said, did, thought, endured, how He looked and felt, and why He went through all this,—these are the subjects of our contemplation in the Passion; and the interest of them all is not only heightened immensely by the continued remembrance of His being God made man; but that remembrance is simply necessary to the contemplation altogether. This is the case, because it is not a romantic story which is moving our affections, but it is a mystery of Christian doctrine which is stirring the depths of our nature, overwhelming us with its majesty and heavenly pathos, and calling up all those complicated natural and supernatural feelings which form the Christian mind and sentiment. Still the remembrance of our Lord's Divinity is not the single or the overwhelming thought in the Passion. Now,

in the Sacred Infancy our Lord's character, His doings and His sufferings, and His interior dispositions are far less prominent in our meditations. Indeed many persons hardly ever think of them at all. It is the grand fact of the Incarnation which is present to our minds, diversified it is true in countless ways, yet still the same one fact or mystery. Jesus sleeps, and we reflect with delighted wonder on the sleep of the Uncreated and Unsleeping, of the "Watcher of Israel who neither slumbers nor sleeps." He sheds tears; and if our tears follow the sweet memory of His, it is because it is so touching to behold in the omnipotent God the evidences of true humanity, the most tender of our infantine weaknesses and the most graceful of our infirmities. If He deigns to seek His Mother's breast, we see in it the mystery of His asking food from His own creature, when He is Himself at that very moment feeding all the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, and the fishes of the deep, and the populous tribes of men. In other words, every action and every suffering of the Sacred Infancy interests us, not so much for its own sake, as gentleness under suffering, sweetness under desertion, silence under wrong, and the like, interest us in the Passion; but it interests as a new way of realizing the Incarnation, as a fresh usage of the Incarnation, as if we could hardly have our fill of gazing upon that most wonderful mystery, and went round it and round it to look at it in every conceivable light and from every possible point of view, and multiplied our ways of expressing it, and always found it equally new and equally delightful. The devotion to the Sacred Infancy is the devotion of one thought, of one idea, of one mystery, while the devotion of the Passion embraces the practices of all

virtues, the varieties of character and spirit, and a thousand other considerations, with the remembrance of the Incarnation lying at the bottom of them all, sustaining them and making them what they are. The devotion to the Blessed Sacrament resembles that to the Sacred Infancy. It has the same character of unity, the same varying and diversifying of a single idea, a single mystery; and moreover the idea and the mystery in the one are the same as in the other, namely, the Incarnation, not in its results, not in its blessings, not in its magnificent developments, but in its simple, beautiful self.

Love delights to multiply the object of its affections. It varies the thought of it in every possible way, and clothes it in every conceivable form. It seems as if it thus gained fresh fuel for its fire, as if new excellences were revealed in the beloved object, and as if its own fervour and fidelity were manifested more feelingly and more loyally. So is it with us and our Incarnate Lord We may live a long life, and through all that life by His grace may serve Him faithfully, and have no other love but Him. Yet never do we seem to have fathomed that one depth of His love, the gracious Mystery of the Incarnation. We study it with the keenest powers we have, we meditate upon it with anxious diligence and devout application, we repose upon it in the tranquillity of prayer, we salute it with swift and fiery ejaculations And still it is ever new. Still each day we return upon it again and again with the same blissful fascination. That one thought is enough for us. As children turn and turn their kaleidoscope, and yet never come to the end of its brilliant combinations, so is it with the Incarnation and ourselves. It is one thing to us in Jesus

sleeping, another thing Jesus weeping, and again another in Jesus at the breast. This is the peculiarity of the devotion to the Sacred Infancy. It is the turning of the kaleidoscope; the brilliants are ever the same, yet the changes are infinite even when they are like, the beauty endless, the sweetness beyond words.

I am speaking of the devotion to the Sacred Infancy as it exists among the great multitude of the faithful, and as it is handed down to us in spiritual works. There are two classes of persons to whom this devotion seems wider and more various; but we shall not find on examination that its character is really changed in either of the two cases. Persons who unite with the practice of mental prayer accurate and minute theological studies, find a greater separateness and distinctness in the different mysteries of the Sacred Infancy, from having continually present to their minds the Catholic teaching that our Lord's Soul was exempt from all imperfection of ignorance, and that He had of course the full use of reason from the very first moment of His Incarnation. Thus our Lord is not simply helpless and passive, allowing his inanimate creatures, heat and cold, wind and wet, night and day, to work their will upon Him, permitting the unreasoning animals to draw nigh to His infant Body and warm it with their breath, and suffering with a mere unresisting patience the passions and affections, the wants and weaknesses, the pains and incommodities, incidental to human childhood. Everything is as much intended, is accompanied by as much mental process, and directed by as much actual energy of will, as the mysteries of His Three Year's Ministry. Thus, as each action of His blessed Passion had many intentions consciously referred

to several ends, and comprised several fitnesses, far more than we can ever compass or exhaust, in like manner each mystery of the Sacred Infancy was characterized by the same variety, seeing that while He was a child in stature He was full-grown man in the use and empire of His consciousness and understanding. True as all this is, there is nevertheless more fancy than reality in the change which it makes in the character of the devotion. Our Lord, both as a child and as adult, vouchsafes to perform human actions, and the proper actions of Infancy and Manhood according to the season. The character of the actions is determined by their own nature, circumstances, and moral significance, and not by the amount of consciousness or intention which actuates them; for every one of our Lord's actions was of infinite value, the least as well as the greatest, and merited immensely. His grace was incapable of growth or of degrees, and therefore the supernatural character of His human actions was equal in all of them: and ordinarily speaking, devotion to the mysteries of our Blessed Lord is devotion to those external manifestations which he was pleased to make of His Human Nature and of the grace with which it was anointed.

Thus it remains true that while our Lord uttered every infantine cry with as much clear use of reason as when He uttered His awful cry of dereliction on the cross, He was still as an infant really helpless, suffering, weak and infirm, and that He condescends to exhibit to us as truly, and to endure for us as really, the peculiar ignominies and abasements of childhood, as He does the quite different ignominies and abasements of maturer life. The character of the devotion is only apparently changed by the memory

of the theological doctrine; it is not really so; and while we should be far from denying the great assistance which prayer often derives from scholastic theology, it must be remembered that the processes in prayer are lofty in pro portion to their simplicity. Hence it may be questionec whether we do not sometimes lose tenderness of love and intimacy of union with our dearest Lord by thus refining on the devotions to the Sacred Humanity. According to God's ordinary method, prayer must be affective before it is contemplative, and discursive before it is affective. Yet it will be a serious hindrance to our progress if we value it in proportion as it is discursive, instead of seeking to simplify our reasonings as much as possible, and to get out of them and beyond them as quickly as we can. We should thus be cherishing an imperfection, and canonizing it as if it were something to be retained and cherished. The consequence would be that our prayer would at best become unprofitable and dry, and would rather bring with it the science that inflates us, than the humble sense of our own wretchedness, and the self-revengeful appetite of mortification, without which prayer is nothing worth. For the crown of prayer is the worship of God through the subjection of our passions.

The other class of persons who might be disposed to quarrel with any description of devotion to the Sacred Infancy as being a devotion of one idea, and by this very characteristic distinguished from devotion to the Passion, are those whose attraction leads them to dwell rather on the interior disposition of Jesus than on the details and circumstances of His outward actions. Beautiful as this spirit is, to which so many saints have set their seal, it does not seem to interfere with the character of the devo-

tion in question. For, as in the former case, the full use of reason only causes our Lord's infantine actions to differ from ours, and does not in any way destroy the reality of their helplessness and weakness, so in this case the existence of certain interior dispositions stands upon the same footing as the use of reason, distinguishing our Lord's actions from those of common men, but leaving untouched the distinction between His actions as Infant and as Adult. Persons devoted to the interior dispositions of Jesus may sometimes imagine that the glory of His Father, or the spirit of oblation, or charity to men, or the love of His Mother, or the spirit of penance and abandonment, may predominate respectively in different mysteries of the Infancy; His sleep may thus be distinguished from His tears; His cries from His smiles, and His hunger from His voluntary concealment of the possession of reason. Yet the value of these pious reflections depends more upon the dispositions of the soul that gives birth to them than upon anything else, unless some private revelation or some infused science give a higher character to them. I do not mean to say that they are not most valuable, and far more precious even than the delicate refinements of theology, or that they do not give a very much more divine character to our devotion to the Sacred Infancy. In fact that devotion is but imperfect when separated either from the fulness and minuteness of some doctrine, or from the consideration of our Lord's interior dispositions. All I mean is, that, while the one gives greater truth and the other greater depth to this most beautiful and efficacious devotion, neither the one nor the other changes its character, or gives it the same sort of variety as devotion to the Passion, or hinders its

being a devotion of one idea, which love, knowledge, and spiritual discernment represent to us a thousand-fold. Neither our knowledge of theology nor our familiarity with the interior dispositions of our Lord will make our devotion to the Infancy the same as our devotion to the Passion, nor make ours a really different devotion from that of the multitude of the faithful; although if we are on our guard against fancifulness and subtlety, both our scholastic doctrine and our interior spirit will immensely heighten our devotion. Still it is not a question of kind, but of degree.

But the connection between the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and to the Sacred Infancy, does not result only from their both being devotions of one idea; but also from the fact that the one idea is the same in both of them, namely, the Incarnation. For the great mercy designed in the Blessed Sacrament is the renewal, and not the renewal only, but the extension also, of the Incarnation. The presence of the Eternal Word made Man, residing in His own creation, and sharing and participating in it, was the greatest gift which God could confer upon the world; because the Hypostatic Union was the closest intimacy which was possible between ourselves and Him. The sun shone upon the Incarnate Word, the moon lighted up the mountain steeps where he was at prayer, the wind stirred His hair, and the ground was pressed by His feet. Silence listened to His Works as if it were enchanted, and they fell upon the thirsty hearts of men like dews of grace. When the day was done, and sleep stole gratefully over tired nature, it ventured to lay its hand upon the heavy eyelids of the Incarnate Word, and He slept. The elements obeyed Him, or He obeyed

them, as He willed. He was a sight, a sound, a touch, a fragrance in the world, such as never had been before, and which was worth infinite creations, nay, far transcended all possible creations whatsoever. If the eye of the Eternal Father had looked with merciful complacency over the virgin world, when it came fresh from His creative hand, and had deigned to pronounce it beautiful and good and blessed, how beautiful and good and blessed must it have been then, when He who was co-equal and co-eternal with Himself was therein, having assumed a created nature, so that human actions of infinite price and of unspeakable loveliness and of divinest grace were issuing from Him at all hours. From the very moment of the Incarnation, creation became quite a different thing from what it ever was before, simply from the presence of our Lord in the flesh.

Now God's gifts are "without repentance." It is not His way, blessed be His holy Name! to withdraw what He has once given. There is nothing retrograde in the course of the divine compassions. One mercy is superseded by a greater; it does not retire, and give place to a less. Such is the royal munificence and exuberance of heavenly love. Hence to withdraw from the earth the presence of the Incarnate Word, once conferred upon it, would be indeed to leave the children of men orphans; our Lord Himself implies this, when reading the anxious thoughts of their hearts, He said to His disciples, I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. Either then our Lord's visible presence upon earth was to be continued, or its place was to be supplied by a presence, every way as real and substantial, and of a higher, more befitting, and more spiritual character. Indeed human

life as God has ordained it in the world would have become impossible, if the visible presence of Jesus had continued, when His resurrection had been proclaimed, His faith taught, and His Church established. It must have given rise to an entirely new state of things, and to laws of life, of moral life, as different from the present, as life in Jupiter or Saturn would be in physical respects. The doom of the world would have been hastened and precipitated. The presence of Jesus, conversant with men, would have been a touchstone which would have driven all mankind very speedily either into the reprobation of the Jews, or into the grace of the Apostles. All wickedness would have put on the awful characteristics of the wickedness during the Passion; and all the probations of life would have centred in the one trial of respecting or accepting the visible mission of Christ. Besides the whole population of the world would have been thrown in vehement and irresistible pilgrimage upon one region and such social and political consequences would have ensued as would have utterly destroyed the equilibrium of the world. Under the present dispensation of things earth is not capable of enduring a transformation into a sensible heaven.

Moreover, it was necessary for our Lord's own friends that His visible Presence should have performed its transient mission, and be discontinued, and the heavens contain Him until the consummation of all things. It is expedient for you that I go away, were His own words to the apostles. For, as several of the ancient fathers as well as the modern doctors of the mystical life teach, they had become attached to His visible presence with an attachment which not only impeded their own progress

in spirituality, but was not so honourable to Him as the profound adoration mingled with sweet familiar love, which His absence and the descent of the Holy Ghost would pour into their souls. Thus, it was not only expedient for them that he should go away, because for them and for us, all things considered, the descent of the Holy Ghost was a more fitting and so more excellent thing than the continuance of His visible presence, but also because its place would be supplied by another presence of His own dear Self, more wonderful and more excellent and more spiritual than His visible presence had been. So much was there in those few words. A little while, and you shall not see Me; and again a little while, and you shall see Me, because I go to the Father! It was necessary then, it was in the usual course of divine gifts, that His new presence should exceed His former one; and this is His Presence in the Blessed Sacrament. It was not precisely our Lord beautiful, or our Lord gentle, or patient, or consoling, or holy, or powerful, that earth could not do without and wanted back again. It was not precisely the Babe of Bethlehem, or the Boy of Nazareth, or the Man of Calvary, without whom heavenly love seemed as if it must faint and die away upon the earth, when the mystery of the Ascension left it all widowed, leaning its whole weight on the prayers and presence of His Immaculate Mother, the queen of the Apostles. It was the Word Incarnate, it was Jesus Himself simply, it was the Human Flesh and Blood which He had taken to Himself and which men had touched and handled, and had been straightway healed and forgiven: this it was which we wanted, Him as Incarnate, Him one of whose natures made Him our

Brother, and Him with that nature whereby He was our Brother; and thus it is that we receive Him in the Blessed Sacrament. It is His Incarnation which is our stay, our blessing, our love, our consolation, in His new sacramental residence amongst us; and as in each mass He is ever renewing and reproducing His Incarnation, it comes to us, as in the mysteries of the Sacred Infancy, day after day, with all the novelty and freshness of His first coming.

Thus the ritual of the Church, and the apparitions which God vouchsafes to the saints, and the actual phenomena of the interior life, establish for us beyond a doubt the striking fact that there is a real and peculiar connection between the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the devotion to the Sacred Infancy. And when we venture to search for reasons, we seem to find them first in the fact that the various mysteries of the Blessed Sacrament are copies or repetitions, with some additional divine touches, of the mysteries of the Sacred Infancy; secondly, in the fact that both the devotions are devotions of one idea, variously represented, and as such are distinct on the one hand from such devotions as those to the Passion, or the Three Years' Ministry, and on the other from devotions to single mysteries, like the Scourging or the Crowning, or to compendiums of the Incarnation, like the Precious Blood of the Sacred Heart; and thirdly in the fact that the single idea of the two devotions is the same, namely, the Incarnation. We must now descend to the details of the Sacred Infancy, and draw out minutely the parallel between it and the Blessed Sacrament.

SECTION III.

THE BABE AND THE HOST.

MANY holy persons have had a special devotion to the mystery of the Annunciation, and one religious congregation has taken it as the badge of its distinction, and the type of its inward and spiritual life. They have fed their souls upon the thought of its profound secresy and hiddenness, and its other unearthly characteristics, Mary's midnight prayer, the visit, the obeisance and salutation of the angel, and the like. Others have brooded over the various perfections disclosed by our Blessed Lady at the time, and above all the magnificence of her tranquillity. They have thought how intense must have been her humility not to have been shaken and ruffled then, and how firm her conformity to God's will that she should have been quiet at such a time and under the shadow of so unutterable a mystery. Others have regarded it as the fountain of the Rosary and dwelt rather upon the stupendous mystery of the Incarnation itself. One moment, and the Virgin blood of Mary was all her own. The immaculate maiden had not been clothed with the solitary prerogative of virgin Maternity. Another moment, and the Sacred Body had been instantaneously fashioned from her purest blood by the Holy Ghost Himself, perfect in every limb, symmetrical in every proportion, exquisitely formed for the keenest and most overwhelming suffering, and in all respects beautiful exceedingly. One moment, and the great empire of nothingness lay before the silent power of God, and no word was spoken over its dim and vast abysses. Far

and wide lay the dark illimitable regions of possible creatures, but there was no stir in their stagnant and obscure depths. Another moment, and more resplendent than the light of heaven, more beautiful than all the spiritual and intellectual beauty of the countless angels, more majestic than the manifold mysterious pomps of all creation beside, sprang forth from nothing the Human Soul of Jesus. One moment, and the Eternal Word was being eternally begotten of the Father, and from Him and from the Father the Holy Spirit was eternally and ineffably proceeding. All created natures were utterly separate and distinct from Him, neither had He assumed any of them Himself, nor descended to be, so to speak, a part of His own creation. But in one and the same moment, so instantaneously that except in mere imagination no atom of time came between, no swiftest, divinest and most lightning-like succession, but in one and the same identical moment the Holy Ghost had fashioned that Body from Mary's blood, and the Soul of Jesus had sprung from nothing and had animated and informed that wonderful Body, and the Body and the Soul found no need of human subsistence, for in that one same identical moment the Person of the Eternal Word had assumed them to Himself, and He was one Person with two natures, and the blissful Virgin was more incomparably virgin than before, and was a Mother too, the Mother of the Eternal God; and the tingling silentness of the quiet midnight filled the little room at Nazareth that night in March, and the unconcious stars drifted across the sky, and the lily was closed and sleeping in its vase, and the watch-dogs of the herdsmen of Nazareth broke ever and anon the stillness of the night, while the awful mystery

was being accomplished. Morning rose on the earth, cold, clear, vernal; and the long-expected Redeemer of mankind had come, and no one but the Mother knew.

Change the scene for a moment to a Catholic altar. It is the mid silence of the great function. One moment, and there is bread in the priest's hands, and wine, the fruit of the grape, in the chalice on the corporal. One moment, and there is the substance of bread, with its accidents inherent in it, and it would be the grossest of idolatries to offer any manner of worship to that senseless substance. One moment, and the Body of our Lord is at the Right Hand of the Father, receiving in the splendour of its ravishing magnificence the worship of the prostrate hierarchies of heaven. Another moment, and what was bread is God. A word was whispered by a creature, and lo! he has fallen down to worship, for in his hands is his Creator, produced there by his own whispered word. One moment, and at the bidding of a trembling, frightened man, Omnipotence has run through a course of resplendent miracles, each more marvellous than a world's creation out of nothing, not as swiftly as a well-skilled finger sweeps down the keys of an instrument, but unspeakably more swiftly; for here there has been no succession: in one and the same identical moment the whole range of these miracles was traversed and fulfilled. There is the selfsame Body which the Holy Ghost fashioned out of Mary's blood. There is the self-same Soul that sprung in the fulness of its beauty from the sea of nothingness. There is the selfsame Person of the Eternal Word who in Mary's womb assumed that Body and that Soul to Himself. Only in this is the altar more wonderful than the room at Nazareth, that here many times a day, and on tens of thou-

sands of other altars, from the northern fringes of everlasting snow to where the exuberant foliage of the tropics droops into the warm seas, and simultaneously on thousands of altars at once, this stupendous mystery is accomplished; and through the instrumentality, not of a sinless mother, but of unworthy, faulty priests. Moreover a new code of existence, without local extension, is conferred upon the Body of Christ, in addition to the mode which it already possessed in heaven. And the sun shines in at the Church windows, and the tapers burn unconsciously on the altar, and the flowers shed their fragrance from the vases, while the great mystery is being enacted. But though inanimate nature has not wherewith to suspect it, and though the senses are deceived and penetrate not beyond the sacramental veils, the very miracle of whose continued unsupported existence they are unable to report, the mystery is no secret; the bended knee, the bowed head, the beaten breast, the shrouded face, the instantaneous hush, has revealed that there is not a Catholic child in the Church who does not know, and love, and fear, and worship with his heart's heart the transcending mystery of love. The marvel of consecration contains within itself the precious wonder of the Annunciation, and more besides.

Who can tell the depths of sweetness which lie hid in the mystery of the Visitation? The Vicar of Christ and the successor of St. Peter has but just raised the dignity of the Feast. St. Francis of Sales founded his order of nuns to perform exterior works of spiritual and corporal mercy, and because they were to be uncloistered and to seek their work, he named them daughters of the Visitation. It pleased Providence that the Saint's will should

not altogether be accomplished. They became cloistered and contemplative. Yet there was no need to change their name. There was more than enough of mystical sweetness and significance in that mystery to represent the fresh life of interior religion which they were now to lead. It were long to tell how many and how attractive were the virtues which the new Mother exercised in this mystery. How spiritual joy lent wings to her feet, and how she overcame her love of seclusion and flew from her nest over the hill-country of Judea, full of charity, to communicate to St. Elizabeth, not the secret, for she knew the Holy Ghost Himself would communicate that to her cousin, but the joy of Messiah's coming; how Elizabeth hailed her as the true Mother of God, and how Mary's immaculate heart overflowed in glorious and prophetic song; and how the angels went with her on her way, attending the living Ark of the Covenant, and worshipping the world's Ruler who was hidden in the sanctuary of His chosen temple,—all these it is not the season to expound. What we have particularly to do with, are the dispositions of Jesus Himself, and the wonders which He wrought. Truly He is in haste to be about His Father's business. Truly He is an impatient conqueror, to be thus early beginning His conquests, and laying the foundations of His world-wide empire. He cannot bear to be in the world for even so short a while, but sin shall feel the weight of His unborn arm. There was none to cast out of Mary. He had seen to that Himself long before. There was not even so much as the shadow of a sin which He could drown in the effulgence of His light. His first mission and ministry was in the womb, and the babe unborn the first conquest of His di-

vine apostolate. By and bye we shall see Him pale and bleeding beneath the moonlit olives on the hill, whose umbrage shrouded the Creator in His astonishing mortal agony, and we shall know with what unutterable intensity He hated sin. Yet the modest picturesque mystery of the Visitation hides a hatred of sin no less intense, and which almost seems to be more powerful and more divine. The Baptist in His mother's womb has been conceived in guilt, like the rest of Adam's children, Mary alone excepted. He is bound with the thraldom of the fall, with the chains of original sin. But the living Ark of the Covenant, the tower of David, the ivory tower, the seat of wisdom, and the marvellous vessel of devotion, brings her heavenly burden nigh to where he is; and the unborn Child destroys the sin and abolishes the curse of the unborn child. The Baptist leaps with exultation in his mother's womb, and worships, with the abounding gladness of his sinless soul, his Redeemer and His God hidden in the Virgin-Mother; for the full use of reason is conferred upon him, and the gifts of original justice are restored to him; and he is so hung over with the ornaments of grace that he shines and burns with a more than human light, and so to overflowing is he filled with heroic sanctity that of all yet born of women none is so great a saint as that unborn John, the Precursor of our Lord: and Elizabeth wonders at the marvel that has been wrought within her while the Mother, whom generations bless, is singing th sweet thanksgiving of her humility, which Jesus is making in her heart and she is uttering with her tongue.

And what is all sweetness in Communion, all joy in benediction, all inward fluttering of the ravished heart before the tabernacle, but the antitype of this delightful

mystery of the Visitation? And has it not always been Mary that brought Him to us? Look at our past lives. When did we come to love Jesus so burningly, so enthusiastically, as we do now? when was it, and where, and how, and what reminiscences are mingled with it all? O my Mother! my Mother! I see as it were threads of gold running ever through the web of my past life They are here and there, no part is without them, no fold but they are shining there. In places the divine pattern is defaced, in others it is obscured, and the golden streaks themselves are tarnished; but still they are there, connecting one part with another, and giving unity to the whole. And when I hold the web up to the light of heaven — perhaps I do not see plainly, for I have had to weep so bitterly over that miserable past — but it seems as if in that light, from the cradle, heresy-darkened, even to the maturity of man's years, the golden threads are always forming themselves into the dear Name of Jesus, and whichever way I look, if I read forward or backward, up or down, and on whichever side I turn the web, still I read Jesus, Jesus, always Jesus, nothing but Jesus. I never have a communion but to thee I owe it. The tabernacle, the pyx, the monstrance—the very beauty of the mystery is that it is thy Jesus, and not another; the Body that was formed from thee, and not a new one, which consecration brings. And when I come to thee on thy feasts, to look at thyself, to admire thy beauty, to praise thy grace, to glorify God for all thy gifts, to kneel before thee and tell thee all my heart in prayer, for thou art omnipotent in thine intercession, thou hast Jesus with thee and makest me feel Him even when haply I was not thinking of Him in my mind, though surely I am always loving Him in my heart.

All our best life, all our spiritual life, is nothing but a succession of Visitations, Visitations from Mary bringing Jesus with her. But nowhere is the similitude so faithful as it is in the Blessed Sacrament. How often when we come near to the tabernacle, a secret fire comes forth, and our hearts burn within us without apparent cause. Cares fall off, tears are dried, doubts melt away, temptations are paralysed, anxieties are allayed, our soul is bathed in quiet sudden jubilee. Joy, exultation, praise, delight, and the sense of forgiveness, the spirit of worship, these are exactly the fruits produced within us, as they were produced in the Baptist's soul. There is no one to whom the mere vicinity of the Blessed Sacrament has not been the cause of unnumbered blessings, even if he knew them not. But there are few who have not felt them, touched, handled, caressed them, almost as if they were sensible things, so vivid and so solid have been the realities of grace. Our hands have handled the Word of life, says St. John. So is it with us. When love has made us acquainted with the Blessed Sacrament, it seems as if His invisible presence upon earth could hardly have been so real, so plain, so cognizable, so undeniably evident, as His sacramental presence. It becomes hard to believe; not because the mystery is so appalling, its miracles so singular and so multitudinous, its difficulties so obscure and so impenetrable. Oh no! but because, O Lord! faith is of things unseen, and we seem to have seen Thee so clearly that we should know Thee and discern Thee now for evermore; and because faith is of things hoped for, and we have had Thee and handled Thee and tasted Thee and possessed Thee; and what is there left whereby to exercise our faith? Behold our

hearts and our souls leaped within us for joy, and what were we that the Mother of our Lord should come to visit us, and bring her Burden nigh unto us, and that He, the cause and the charity and the speed of her coming, should work these secret miracles upon our hearts that would be almost innocent if they were unconscious that it was He, but alas! knowing Him, have been cold and wayward, peevish and estranged?

The mysteries of the Sacred Infancy as they gradually unfold themseles, now bring us in sight of a very tender and deep devotion which has long been dear to interior souls, and has often brought forth wonderful fruits in the spiritual life, devotion to the life of Jesus in His Mother's Womb. The whole mystery necessarily draws our thoughts to the life of the Eternal Word in the Bosom of the Father, of which adorable mystery His dwelling in the Womb of Mary is the copy and the manifestation; and we must have some understanding of the one in order to comprehend the other. Theology leads us to contemplate the Eternal Word in His everlasting and perpetual Generation from the Father, a Generation infinitely noble, infinitely pure, unbeginning, unspeakable and incomprehensible. The Bosom of the Father is the mystical name which we give to His divine repose. It gives us, in imperfect words, the idea of a home, and thus enables us the better to figure to ourselves the Son going forth from that Bosom, though in truth He never left it, and His sojourn among men; for none hath come down from heaven but the Son of Man who *is* in heaven. We behold Him there in the plenitude of His Divinity, one with the Father by an unutterable union, co-equal, co-eternal, consubstantial with Him, and yet although

His Son, in no way and in no sense subordinate, but independent. In that dwelling in the Bosom of the Father, we behold and adore the mutual love of the Father and the Son, and their ineffable conversation, and we worship as also true, co-equal, co-eternal God, that Love who is the Person of the Holy Ghost, eternally proceeding from the Two as from a single fountain. We see there the eternal plan of the Incarnation, and the series, as our ignorance forces us to call it, of those resplendent and dazzling decrees which concern Jesus, Mary, and the destinies of creation. The fall of the angels is foreseen after the predestination of Jesus and His Mother, and they are excluded from the remedial benefits of the Incarnation, which were decreed as if by superaddition when the fall was foreknown. We behold also the various choices of the Eternal Word in His Father's Bosom, His indescribable choice of His Sacred Humanity, His eternal choice of sufferings, of the sufferings of His whole life, of His death, and of the Cross in particular, and above all, that choice in which He manifests so incomparably His divine perfections, His choice of His Mother, which choice was at once the single yet threefold fountain of her grandeurs, her graces, and her sorrows. But it is one thing to write all this in dry, harsh, technical words, and another thing to brood over it and foster it in the heat of prayer, when our spirits delight to prostrate themselves before the mysteries of the Most Holy Trinity, and in proportion to the depth of our abasement is the clearness of the lights which God mercifully causes to shine upon our souls. Then all these things become touching as a tale of love or grief among men, full of a thousand meanings, and each meaning full of tenderness and tears

If I have said it before,* bear with my repeating it again, our devotion to the Eternal Word is the measure of our devotion to Jesus, God and Man; and if the mysteries of the Thirty-Three Years and the Blessed Sacrament seem to yield but little light, heat and unction to our meditations, it is often for want of an intelligent and thoughtful and studious adoration of the divine mysteries of the Eternal Word.

Now this life in the Bosom of the Father seems to devout souls made visible, intelligible, and familiar to them by our Lord's life in His Mother's Womb, and is the chief reason of that most interior devotion. Let us venture to describe it, as it has seemed to holy men. The Eternal Word, who has dwelt in the Bosom of the Father in incommunicable glory from all eternity, seems to begin a new life in the Womb of Mary. A change seems, of course only seems, to come over the Unchangeable; yet even the appearance of a change is a deep and blissful mystery. This new life of His is infinitely precious, infinitely pure, and all for us and at our disposal. From the first moment of His Conception the beatitude of His human Soul was perfect, and of all the blessed Souls He was the first, in the actual enjoyment of the Beatific Vision, as well as by predestination; and there is no other soul that ever has or ever will enjoy that Vision, whose beatitude is not obtained by Him, and without Him would not be: or even then whose beatitude is at all comparable to His. From that mysterious and inconceivably joyous first moment He had, as Man, a clear view of God. His was the first human soul that ever enjoyed it at all, and

* All for Jesus, chap. vii. sect. 2.

the only human soul that ever enjoyed it in this life; and His sight of God, at that first moment, as now, far exceeded in clearness the vision of all men and all angels. His first act of love was the most perfect act which ever has been or ever will be; and it was the most comprehensive, for it extended to all the works of God, and most specially and ardently to all men. His joy in that first moment was ineffable. His Soul rejoiced in His Divinity to which it was united; it rejoiced in infusing graces into His Blessed Mother, and in destining, with clearest and minutest foresight, graces for each one of us in particular. His life was a life of incomparable adoration of His Father, of humble submission to Him as the Creator of His Sacred Humanity, of profound reverence, from His perfect view of the perfections of the Father, and of true worship, from a sense of the nothingness of His Human Soul. The same life of adoration may be considered in relation to the Holy Spirit, and, in a most mysterious and unimaginable manner, to the contemplation of the Person of the Word by His own Soul, to which it was instead of a human personality. The praise which he gave to the Most Holy Trinity in this secret life infinitely transcends all that the worship of all possible worlds could give. Every affection of His Sacred Heart was of infinite worth; and as they were countless, we may say that it worshipped God with momentary infinities of glory. Every affection too was an act, a real act, of most substantial worship; and yet not contented with all this magnificent homage of His Sacred Heart, He went beyond Himself and excited His Mother's Immaculate Heart to join its wondrous powers and untold worth to His, as if, though so far infeferior to His, they were yet in some sense a necessary

complement to His. And with this praise and worship we must join that silent and unutterable Te Deum, which every moment of that life was to the majesty of God. Who can imagine the thanksgiving of His Soul for the joys and prerogatives of the Hypostatic Union, and all the marvels and blessings that come along with it, and the way in which that thanksgiving comprehended all the blessings of the Creator to His creatures, past, present, and to come? If all the countless spirits of angels, with the various beauties and eminences of their different choirs, could cast their whole beings into some heavenly fire and burn away like incense in the presence of the Most High, the offering would be nothing-worth, the thanksgiving not worthy to be mentioned, in comparison with the slightest elevation of the Sacred Heart in Mary's Womb.

Furthermore, in this life He united the apparently incompatible states of Viator and Comprehensor. He was at once on His way to bliss, with merits to augment and acquire, with a work to do, a sacrifice to make, sufferings to endure, and a perseverance to accomplish; and also He had arrived already at the term, He had comprehended the full reward, and there was nothing either of kind or of degree which could be added to the Vision of God which he enjoyed already. Indeed His being Viator at all was a sort of violence to the Son of God, a voluntary violence which was itself part of the lovingness of the mystery of the Incarnation. Indeed it was love which united the two incompatible states. From the first moment of that mysterious life He offered Himself to the Eternal Father, with all His graces; He offered Himself without reserve, and for everything, and with the most

consummate purity of oblation. He was filled with compassion for all the miseries of creation, and this never left Him henceforward; and most of all did He feel for sin, the greatest and the truest of our miseries, and He distinctly and separately pitied the sins of each one of us in particular. Nay, He at once took the burden of them on Himself. He assumed it with love, took the cross from His Father's hands and ours, and embraced not only all the sufferings needful for our redemption, but also all that prodigality of unnecessary suffering which characterized His ever blessed Passion. For the glory of God and for our salvation He begins His work in that secresy with fervour, and He continues it with constancy. His freedom was perfect, and hence in the first instant His merits were infinite; for the worth of each action was infinitely meritorious. He surrendered Himself as a prisoner in His Mother's womb, for crime, for debt, and as a prisoner of war, as if He were a delinquent threefold by all those three liabilities. He only left His prison to suffer and to expiate, and it seems as though He loved it so, that He repeats His state of imprisonment in the Blessed Sacrament. Neither was it less a state of dependence than of imprisonment; for He made Himself dependent on Mary for life, for nourishment, and for preservation. It was also a life of solitude; for He was in so sweet a desert, so absent from creatures, so alone with God in the most perfect of sanctuaries, that the calm, unworldly cloister of the contemplative cannot compare therewith; neither did He hasten to leave it, for He is not idle there. And there also, and to Him, silence was, as usual, the sister of solitude. He was conceived in the silent night; and though He was the Word, yet He spoke not, but was silent then

and afterwards, as He is in the Blessed Sacrament, thus consecrating the practice of silence for His servants, and His saints. His occupations there were sufferings, humiliations, weaknesses, poverty, prayer, obedience, and desire, as they are His occupations now and always beneath the species in the Blessed Sacrament. He suffered from the inconvenience of His prison, and the self-abnegation of such a state, when He already possessed the full use of reason and that transcendently perfect and superhuman consciousness which the union of His Soul with the Person of the Word alone could give: and to which mere human consciousness is in nowise to be compared. He suffered also from the anticipation of future suffering, and as it were inflicted upon Himself with intensest keenness all the sufferings of His Mother, His martyrs, and His elect. His humiliations were inexplicable; for as well might we hope to tell the Eternal Generation of the Word as to express the depth of His humiliations.

His Conception, a mystery all radiant with the beauty of the most heavenly chastity, the sole contemplation of which is the delight of pure souls, was to Him an infinite abasement. That He did not "abhor the Virgin's Womb" was a condescension simply and literally infinite. He humbled Himself also before God for the littleness and nothingness of His created Humanity, and before men for the future indignities He had chosen hereafter to endure. If His Soul abounded in the joy of the Beatific Vision, and His reason in the might of its glorious and unequalled perfection, the weaknesses of His Body were only the more remarkable, such as His inability to speak, to change His posture, and to use His senses, just as He is, and as He vouchsafes to be, in the

Blessed Sacrament. The marvellous poverty of the Blessed Sacrament is foreshadowed also in the poverty of this secret life. He lies there despoiled of His glory, in some sense despoiled of Himself, and condescending to need us His creatures; and His prayers there were continual, for all of us; nay, can I doubt that there and then, with plainest foresight and sweetest forbearance, He actually prayed for me, and that I am feeling at this moment the unweakened force of that distant prayer? The obedience in the womb to His Mother, to the appointed time, and to the future behests of all men, even sinners, enemies and executioners, presents an exact parallel to His obedience in the Blessed Sacrament; and while He inspires Mary with holy desires to give Him to men, to see Him with her eyes, and to serve Him as her Son and her God, He Himself lives a life of intensest desires to glorify the Father, to save the souls of men; nay, perhaps He even longed to quit His sweet sanctuary in order that He might enter on a life of yet deeper and keener suffering.

It would simply weary the reader to repeat almost word for word this description of our dearest Lord's Life in the Womb, changing the phrases to apply it to the Blessed Sacrament. The parallel is so complete, that it must already have suggested itself; and I have dwelt upon it at greater length, because, as the devotion to the life in the womb is especially a devotion of interior souls, so the corresponding thoughts with regard to the Blessed Sacrament are those which are most familiar to interior souls in their prayers before the tabernacle; and again as all the mysteries of the Sacred Infancy take their colour and character from the life in the womb, to

establish the analogy between it and the Blessed Sacrament is in truth to establish the analogy between the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacred Infancy altogether. But the comparison is as yet by no means exhausted. If we pass in review the other mysteries of the Sacred Infancy, we shall perceive the same resemblance; and the more we descend into minute details the more striking the similitude becomes.

SECTION IV.

THE MOTHER AND THE SON.

LET us think for a little while of devotion to our Blessed Lady. Who can doubt that there is a close and invariable connection between devotion to our dear Mother and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament? The force of terms would be enough to prove it. The lives of the Saints and the teaching of spiritual books are both full of it. But we do not need them for proofs; for the experience of every one of us proves it decisively, to ourselves at least. We have felt and known that in proportion as we loved our Blessed Lady, our devotion to the Blessed Sacrament grew more tender and more reverent, and the more we were with the Blessed Sacrament, even without seeming to think of Mary, the more an intense devotion to her took possession of the very depths of our heart. This is a phenomenon which is universal throughout the life of the Church, and which needs no further commentary than the remembrance that one is the Mother, and One the Son. What we are concerned to show chiefly now is the especial connection

between devotion to the Mother of God, and the mysteries of the Sacred Infancy. Let us begin before our Lord was born, and sit for a while by the four first fountains of devotion to the blissful Mother.

What is it that makes the Espousals of our Lady so sweet and so fertile a source of contemplation? That mystery is as it were a woody mountain lighted up with the gold of the yet unrisen sun. It is a manifold prophecy of things to come. It is the preparation of that mysterious shield of secresy behind which God would place the great mystery of the Incarnation. The double beauty of the Mother and the Maid is shining there beforehand. Moreover it contains within itself, all the circumstances considered, the exercises of an heroic virtue such as well beseems the Sinless and Elect Daughter of God. Obedience, faith, self-renunciation, humility, and virginity, all these graces were practised there as the world had never seen them before. But this mystery of a twofold purity, at once a type of the virginity and yet fecundity of the Blessed Trinity, and of the Union of the Two Natures in the One Person of our Lord,—what would it be but for the light which the coming mysteries of the Sacred Infancy already cast upon it?

So too the Presentation of our Blessed Lady is a mystery full of beauty, yet a beauty which hardly can be called its own. It is a lovely sight in truth to see; there is the miraculous Maiden of three years old, mounting the temple steps with the gravity and dignity of age, and offering herself to the House of God with the full use of the most comprehensive and majestic intellect which the world had ever known, even at that early age. Yet what is it but one step in an oblation which began in Anna's womb, rose

in its heroic degrees of life-long self-sacrifice, attained its highest height on Calvary, and stayed there on that same mystical Calvary fifteen years after He had come down from it and was gone to His Father's glory? It is as one of the marvellous beginnings of the marvellous Mother that we gaze with so much devotion on Mary's Presentation.

Let us mount higher still. Earth never broke forth with so gay and glad a fountain as when the Babe Mary, the infant who was the joy of the whole world, the flower of God's visible creation, and the perfection of the invisible and hitherto queenless angels of His court, came like the richest fruit, ready-ripe and golden, of the world's most memorable September. There is hardly a feast in the year so gay and bright as this of her Nativity, right in the heart of the happy harvest, as though she were, as indeed she was, earth's heavenliest growth, and whose cradle was to rock to the measures of the whole world's vintage songs; for she had come who was the true harvest-home of that homeless world. Yet it was the mystery of the maternity which made her Nativity a joy so great. It also must lean forward and catch its light from out the mysteries of the Sacred Infancy.

Higher still now, up to yonder primal fountain, around which at this moment* the Church of God is drawing her lines and raising her circumvallations, as it were, about the purest fountain of the waters of Sion. Here is the living water of divinest miracle, divinest redemption, divinest grace, divinest love, our Mother's Immaculate Con-

* Written while the Vicar of Christ was gathering to the Holy City the Catholic episcopate to celebrate this most auspicious event of his grand pontificate.

ception. See how the whole Church is gathering round in crowds to gaze into the deep liquid bosom of the waters, and see the wonders of heaven and the operations of God faithfully and awfully imaged there. Countless souls are feeding highest sanctity upon its unworldly freshness. There are the doctors of the Church slaking their thirst for truth at its animating streams; and the blind multitudes drink and look up, and behold! their eyes are opened, and Jesus shows more beautiful and Mary shines more brightly: and the poor and the comfortless and all the careworn, high or low, mitred, crowned, or bareheaded, are there, and they throw the waters up into the air for joy, and as they fall they make countless rainbows all over the horizon of the storm-tost Church. And troops of Virgins keep glad watch over its waters day and night with special prayer and song. And the Chief Shepherd is there, kneeling on the fountain's marge, and at his sign from all the orders of the Church rises up in stern magnificence the old Veni, Creator, the prelude of the most glorious definition of the Catholic faith, one which the torment of cruel heresy has not wrung from the reluctant reverence of the Church, but which is the irresistible and spontaneous outburst of doctrine and devotion, too hot to be longer pent within her mighty heart. The wisdom of the schools and the instinct of the multitude have vied with each other, and who shall say which was conqueror in this holy strife. O happy they whom God has kept, like Simeon of old, to this glad day, when Peter has bid his shepherds pitch their tents and feed their flocks so high up the holy mountain, and by this well of purest waters! Yet it is the joy of Bethlehem which is beating in them. It is not only or chiefly the sinlessness of God's

fair creature, but of God's dear Mother, which we are greeting with such triumphant acclamation. It is at the well-head of the Incarnation that we are worshipping. These waters of gladness, we look to drawing them one day out of another well, when they have changed their colour and had their price put on them; for they are the blessed elements of the Precious Blood.

But let us rest another moment at the Immaculate Conception, and from the height of that early mystery see what a vista is open before us. I said those waters would one day be Precious Blood. I might have said, They will one day be the Body and Blood of Christ upon the Altars of the Church. I called that mystery the well-head on earth whence first sprung to light the eternal decrees of God's redeeming love. Watch the current of grace, which way it flows. Down from the mountain of the Immaculate Conception for nine long months it wends its way through wonders unimaginable and graces incomparable. Once more it issues to the light when the outward eyes of men could gaze their fill upon the beauty of God's Infant Mother. Past the steps of the temple on the day of the Presentation, and around the holy two in the Espousals, and to the house at Nazareth, it has flowed for fifteen years. Let us look at the fountain once more. It is a fount of blood in Mary's Immaculate Heart, and lo! it ebbs away unseen, and see! it is another fount of Blood in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and round it gather all the mysteries of the Sacred Infancy, of the Boyhood in Nazareth, of the Three Years' Ministry, and of the Salutary Passion. What a vista, those Three and Thirty Years! Look at the fountain again! It was scattered; it was in the dust of Olivet, on the stones of Sion's streets, on the

lashes of the scourge, on the cast-off crown of thorns, on the soaked vestments on Calvary, on Mary's hands and the darkly-stained tree of the cross; angels have gathered it together, adored it, worshipped it as God, as they were bound to do; and now behold! another fountain! It is in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Risen. He bears it secretly about the earth for forty days. It ascends with Him to heaven. There at this hour it is worshipped in its divine beauty, on a higher mountain far than the Immaculate Conception, at the Right Hand of the Father. It has risen higher than its level. Onward still it majestically lapses through centuries of grace, whose rivers seem to widen and to grow more exuberant in every age: and at last all round about it, dear reader, stand the graces, the preparations of graces, the fruits of graces which have to do with you and me, and our turning all to God; and the vista that began with the Immaculate Conception closes with the Blessed Sacrament.

If it be true, as St. Thomas teaches, that all the grace we receive before we are participators in this queen of Sacraments, we receive only in proportion as we implicitly desire to receive the Holy Communion,* and if it be true that the Blessed Sacrament is both the augmentation and the perfection of the spiritual life within us, and that the Passion of our Lord is the fountain, origin, and principle of the Blessed Sacrament, then is it true that for each one of us that marvellous avenue of graces, which began in the Immaculate Conception, runs without a fault or break straight to the Blessed Sacrament. The one mystery answers to the other; the one illuminates the other; the one completes and consummates the other. The Blood

* De Euch. q. lxxix, art 1. ad prim.

that is in the Chalice is from the living Heart of Jesus. It was shed in the Passion before it was shed in the Chalice. It had lived long in His Sacred Heart before He shed it; and He took it at the first, with His spotless Flesh, from the Immaculate Heart of Mary; and that it was sinless and stainless there was from the Immaculate Conception. And so at one end of the avenue is Mary's sinless flesh, prepared for her as for the Mother of God, and at the other end the sinful flesh of man made immortal and incorruptible by the Flesh of Jesus, Mary's Son, and the sinful soul of man bathed to a glorious purity in the Blood of Jesus, Mary's Son, through the mystery of His sweet Sacrament of love; and the light that lies ahead, the light we are all approaching, and have not yet attained, the glow and splendour of our heavenly home, it is by the same sweet Sacrament that we shall attain it, and make it ours at last. So at every mass, and in each communion we look up to the Immaculate Conception. The light of that far-reaching mystery is in our faces on the altar-step. It beams direct upon us, and so full is it of the same light as the Blessed Sacrament that we seem almost to hear our Mother's voice from that distant fountain,* "Eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved!"†

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* Cant. v. 1.

† How many hearts were set to ponder on eternal things by the unearthly joy which took visible possession of all the nations, tribes and languages of the Church, at the definition of the Immaculate Conception; and how it seemed to darken the dread shadow in which those were, who stood back hurt and scared by that outburst of light from the Eternal Truth, that making visible of Mary's Throne by the Incarnate Word Himself! It is as if the definition of the Immaculate Conception were the grand probation of our times, when the

But to return from this digression, if digression it really be. All that is Mary's seems to tell us more of Jesus than it does of her; and His mysteries again throw more light on her than they do on Him. Who shall sunder what God has so marvellously joined? This is my excuse. I have asked you to look at the four fountains of devotion to our Lady, which preceded the Sacred Infancy, and to see how they owe their light and glory to it. Now let us look at the four fountains of her glory which are subsequent to the Sacred Infancy. Never was mere creature exalted to such a position of power and empire as was Mary made mother of mankind at the foot of the Cross, when her woes were consummated and her heart broken, and yet she miraculously lived. Yet here again the light of the Sacred Infancy is on her. It is as Mother of God that she becomes Mother of men as well. It is because she bore Him that she had a right to share with Him what He bore for us. Again, when at Pentecost she, who was all light already, was inconceivably illuminated and gifted by the Holy Ghost, it was as the Mother of the Word that she became queen of the apostles of the Word. The glory of her death of love was also the earthly crown of the Annunciation; and the mystery of the Assumption involved the heavenly crown whereby our Lord paid her for the delightful ministries of her maternal love. Of course all these four mysteries have a beauty and a glory and a significance of their own; yet they are what they are, their full beauty and dignity belongs to them, because of the mysteries of the Sacred Infancy.

Mother is now, like her Son, set for the rise or fall of many who deemed themselves in Israel.

Our Lady's life may be divided into four mysteries preceding the Incarnation, the Immaculate Conception, the Nativity, the Presentation, and the Espousals, then into the four great mysteries of the Sacred Infancy, the Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity, and Presentation, and then into four mysteries subsequent, her Compassion, Pentecost, her Death, and her Assumption. These are her twelve stars. Between the Sacred Infancy and the Cross there intervene four mysteries of shadow, and of deepest import, full of glory, but a hidden glory, or rather a seeming shame. These I call the Eclipse of Mary, wherein she is most especially likened to her Son, and drinks deepest of the similitudes of the Incarnation. They are the Finding in the Temple, the Marriage at Cana, Jesus leaving Nazareth to begin His Ministry, and His words when He was told that she was at the door. Full as they are of doctrine and devotion, these four mysteries do not concern us now. What I wish to point out here is that the fountains of her honour are in the four great mysteries of the Sacred Infancy, the Annunciation whereby she became the Mother of God, the Visitation which implies His life in the Womb, the Nativity when He put Himself into her hands, and the Presentation when He enabled her to offer to God an offering as immense as God Himself: and that these four mysteries cast a light on the four that precede the Sacred Infancy, and the four that follow it: and the four mysteries of her Eclipse would be no mysteries at all but for her Divine Maternity. Then I argue thus: The devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is the same as the devotion to the Sacred Infancy. But devotion to the Sacred Infancy is in fact devotion to our Blessed Lady.

Therefore devotion to our Blessed Lady is devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Judge whether I prove this sufficiently.

Those whose spirit leads them to look at everything as it comes from Jesus, as His doing, or permitting, or willing, base their devotion to our Blessed Lady simply on the will of her Son; and while they by no means think lightly of the decrees of God, the intrinsic rights of the Divine Maternity, or the theological conveniences which we learn in the schools, nevertheless, they repose the devotion to our Blessed Lady on these three axioms or facts: 1. Jesus did not come without her. 2. When He came, He made the access to Him lie through her. 3. When He went He left her to be to the Church what she had been to Him, and in fact always works in the Church by her and never without her.* Now, look at the first fact, Jesus did not come without her. She was an integral part of the plan of redemption, not a mere ornament, as some speak. Can anything be merely ornamental in any work of God? It may be doubted whether it is consistent with reverence to say so. The first thing that meets us in the Sacred Infancy is that He will not be incarnate without her consent. That there was the Incarnation was owing to her consent, and therefore, that there was the Blessed Sacrament, which is a daily and hourly renewal of the Incarnation, is owing to her consent. What is present in the Blessed Sacrament by the

* This last truth is wonderfully brought out in the letters of M. Olier, and was a principal characteristic of his beautiful spirit. It has descended upon his sons, and as it was in his own time the spirit of the saintly Lantages of Puy, so is it now of the writer of the life of Sister Bourgeoys, and other works, whose modesty it would be indelicate to offend by praise.

force of consecration is just what He took from Mary, and only that, His Flesh and Blood. All else is present by concomitance. Some theologians say deep things of the preservation of the original matter of His Body, and its not being liable to the usual changes.* St. Ignatius had a mysterious vision in which Mary showed him what was in some sense hers in the Adorable Host. But these thoughts led once through an untheological exaggeration to an irregular devotion, mentioned by Benedict XIV.; and so for the present I pass on. I have said enough for my present purpose. Let us come to the second fact. When He came, He made the access to Him lie through her. When St. John the Baptist was to be sanctified, it was through her that the grace came. She was as it were deputed to confer on him the insignia of original justice. But I have already shown the parallel which there is between the Blessed Sacrament and our Lord's life in the Womb. When the simple shepherds come to worship the new-born king in Bethlehem, our Lady stands guardian by the manger side. When the learned kings of the East knelt to make their mystic offerings to the Omnipotent Child, it was on Mary's lap they found Him. Her knees were the seat of wisdom. And if they kissed the Saviour's feet, it was she who interpreted His will, and permitted the familiarity and the grace. So too in the Blessed Sacrament, the light of her dignity shines upon the priests of her Son, and what was once her singular prerogative has become the office and the right of multitudes. For what is Benediction, but repeating what was done to the shep-

* See Book IV. which answers to this book, as the third answers to the first.

herds and the kings? only in this, as in all things else, the Blessed Sacrament multiplies and enriches the first privileges of the Incarnation; and whereas this happened once to the shepherds and once to the kings, it now happens many times a day all the world over, and freely to mixed multitudes of good and bad. Turn to the third fact. He always works in the Church by her, and never without her. In dogma, it has passed almost into a proverb that the doctrine about Mary shields the doctrine about Jesus, and contains it as she once contained Himself.* In ritual they are never separated. In devotion they have grown together: and in great ecclesiastical epochs, her action has been manifested to the Church in countless ways, both natural and miraculous. As M. Olier and his school have long since been prominent in teaching, just as St. Bernard taught in his doctrine about the mystical neck of the Church, our Lord never seems to act in any notable way in the Church without our tracing the instrumental hand and power of Mary. So it was in the Sacred Infancy; the world was governed through and from her: as the world is governed at this hour through and from the species of the Blessed Sacrament. So that if you examine it reverently and minutely, the Sacred Infancy is itself a picture of the Blessed Sacrament and of Mary in the Church: the Blessed Sacrament images the Sacred Infancy and Mary in the Church; and Mary in the Church is best seen, best explained, and best commented upon, by the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacred Infancy. And how far does experience bear out what has been said? Why, to so great

* See Father Newman's Discourses. On the glories of Mary, xvii. xviii.

an extent, that in the devout life it is almost the same thing to say of a man, that he has a great devotion to our Blessed Lady, or that he has a great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

Much more might be said of devotion to our Blessed Lady in connection with devotion to the Blessed Sacrament; but it must be remembered I am only concerned with it now, so far as it bears upon the Sacred Infancy.

SECTION V.

THE FOSTER-FATHER AND HIS CHILD.

FROM Mary to Joseph the transition is natural and easy. The mysteries of St. Joseph rise up like a beautiful cloud of incense from the Sacred Infancy. He belongs wholly to it. We know nothing of him except in relation to it. It seems the one end for which he was created and so wonderfully sanctified, the one work which God gave him to do. He is altogether detached from the Passion. It does not even cast shadows over him beforehand as it does over the Mother of Sorrows. Nay, even before Jesus has left the Holy House for the toil of His Three Years' Ministry, Joseph has been taken to his rest. Worn out with divine love, he has died in a sweet extasy, pillowed on the bosom of Jesus, and with Mary by his side, in the very lap of all that was most beautiful and most holy and most heavenly on earth. No thought of violence mingles with the memory of his peaceful though anxious offices. The Blood of the Circumcision was his Gethsemane and his Golgotha. His early life is lost in obscurity, and of his boyhood we can form no idea, beyond what is supplied by a vision of

Sister Emmerich. But who can doubt that all was a preparation for the great office to which God appointed him? Who can doubt that all was forming and consecrating him as the foster-father of the Word made flesh? Belonging, as he does, exclusively to the Sacred Infancy, we shall not be surprised to find that the spirit of devotion to him is the spirit of devotion to the Sacred Infancy; and that with two additions of the most touching sort. First of all he seems to represent ourselves in the Cave of Bethlehem, the Sojourn in Egypt and the House at Nazareth. All the intimacy and familiarity to which the Infant Saviour vouchsafes to give us right and title by His Incarnation, all the minute ministries of tenderness and devotion which He condescends to receive from us, all the daring joy which His infantine infirmities cause in our hearts, and all the trembling adoration which the nearness of His hidden divinity demands from us,—all these things Joseph is there to receive and to pay, to feel and to show, as it were in our behalf. He is there as the representative of all the future generations of the faithful, especially of those whose hearts are drawn by a singular attraction to these first mysteries of Jesus.

But, secondly, St. Joseph is in Bethlehem, Egypt, the Wilderness, and Nazareth, as the shadow of the Eternal Father. This is the immensity of his dignity. The incommunicable and ever-blessed Paternity of the Father is in figure communicated to him. He is the foster-father of Jesus. To the world without he passes for his father. He exercises the authority of a Father over Him, and performs for Him the affectionate and anxious offices of a Father. Nay, in His Human Nature our Lord is subordinate to Joseph, whereas in His Divine Nature He

never could be subordinate to the Eternal Father. The unspeakable treasures of God, Jesus and Mary, are committed to St. Joseph's keeping; and he is himself a treasure, as well as the treasure-house of God. He is part of the scheme of redemption. Like Jesus and Mary, he has his types and fore-runners and prophecies in the ancient Covenant. He assists God in keeping the mystery of the Incarnation secret; and as the representative of the Eternal Father, he is to us in his attendance upon the Holy Child a perpetual memorial of His Divinity. By his very office, by that in heaven which he adumbrates, he reminds us at every turn that the Babe is Very God of Very God. Thus while he teaches us the greatest familiarity, he also teaches us the greatest distance. While he encourages us to come near and kiss, he bids us also fall down upon our knees and adore profoundly the hidden majesty of the new-born Eternal. Thus heaven and earth meet in him at Bethlehem, in his double office of representative of the Eternal Father and representative of faithful Christians. What wonder theologians should tell us such great things of his copious graces and his mighty gifts? What wonder the faithful should believe* that with him the resurrection of the just had been anticipated, that he was one of those who walked the streets of Jerusalem at Easter in his risen body, and that he had borne it with him into heaven, when he went up as part of our Lord's equipage and retinue on the Thursday of the Ascension?

What a gift it was which Jesus gave to His Church in this tender and sublime devotion! Already had the doctrine of our Blessed Lord been fixed and ascertained.

* Suarez de Mysteriis.

Out of the treasures of her apostolical tradition the Church had met every heresy, and by the infallibility of Peter's chair had ratified the Councils and defined the true dogmas about the Person and Natures of Jesus. Not only was the reality of His Sacred Humanity established, and the singleness of His Person, and the unconfusedness of His Natures, and the duality of His Wills, but magnificent truths about His Soul and the Faculties of His Soul and the method of the Hypostatic Union had been laid down, and left to the faithful as so many prolific fountains of glorious theology. But one thing above all was clear. The unapproachable heights of His true Godhead rose beyond a question before the eyes of all men. From the professor in his chair to the child in his catechism-class, none could now doubt that dogma without knowing that they were not Catholics. But while all this was being evolved, the depths of apostolical tradition had been sounded again and again about the dignity of the Mother of God. In securing the honour of the Son, the old Churches had been interrogated, and the voices of Peter, Paul, and James, and John, had given oracles that wrapped the Son round in His Mother's honour. And as the noise and dust of all these conflicts with heresy settled down, — clear to the eyes of all, as it was to St. John in the island of Patmos, rose the gorgeous vision of the Woman, the Mother of the Man-Child, with twelve stars around her head, and the moon beneath her feet. Thus the adoration of Jesus and the devotion to Mary had taken their places immovably in the sense of the faithful and in the practical system of the Church, one shedding light upon the other, and both instructing, illuminating, nourishing, and sanctifying the people.

But there was still one more of the "earthly trinity," as it is called. Devotion to St. Joseph lay as it were dormant in the Church. Not that there was anything new to be known about him, or any fresh revelation to be made of him. He belonged exclusively to the Sacred Infancy. The beginning of St. Matthew's Gospel contained him. By two evangelists he had been left in complete silence, and the third had barely named him in the genealogy. Tradition held some scanty notices of him; but they had no light but what they borrowed from St. Matthew. All we have now of St. Joseph was there then; only the sense of the faithful had not taken it up; God's time was not yet come. The sense of the faithful was not like the complete science of the apostles. It was not equal to it: it had to grow to it, to master it, to fill it out with devotions, to animate it with institutions, to submit to it as a perfectly administered hierarchy. But God's time came for this dear devotion; and it came like all His gifts when times were dark and calamities were rife.

Beautiful Provençe! it rose up in the west from your delightful land, like the cloud of delicate almond blossom that seems to float and shine between heaven and earth over your fields in spring. It rose from a Confraternity in the white city of Avignon, and was cradled by the swift Rhone, that river of martyr memories, that runs by Lyons, Orange, Vienne and Arles, and flows into the same sea that laves the shores of Palestine.* The land which the contemplative Magdalen had consecrated by

* Another account is that the west borrowed it from the east, and that it was imported into the Latin from the Greek Church by the Carmelites.

her hermit life, and where the songs of Martha's school of virgins had been heard praising God, and where Lazarus had worn a mitre instead of a grave-cloth, it was there that he, who was so marvellously Mary and Martha combined, first received the glory of his devotion. Then it spread over the Church. Gerson was raised up to be its doctor and theologian: and St. Theresa to be its saint; and St. Francis of Sales to be its popular teacher and missioner. The houses of Carmel were like the holy house of Nazareth to it, and the colleges of the Jesuits its peaceful sojourns in dark Egypt. The contemplative took it up and fed upon it: the active laid hold of it, and nursed the sick and fed the hungry in its name. The working people fastened on it, for both the saint and his devotion were of them. The young were drawn to it, and it made them pure; the aged rested on it, for it made them peaceful. St. Sulpice took it, and it became the spirit of the Secular Clergy. And when the great Society of Jesus had taken refuge in the Sacred Heart, and the Fathers of the Sacred Heart* were keeping their lamps burning ready for the resurrection of the Society, devotion to St. Joseph was their stay and their consolation, and they cast the seeds of a new devotion, to the Heart of Joseph, which will some day flourish and abound. So it gathered into itself orders and congregations, high and low, young and old, ecclesiastical and lay, schools and confraternities, hospitals, orphanages and penitentiaries, everywhere holding up Jesus, everywhere hand in hand with Mary, everywhere the refreshing shadow of the Eternal Father. Then when it had filled Europe with its odour, it went over the Atlantic, plunged

* See Vie du P. Varin. p. 37.

into the damp umbrage of the back-woods, embraced all Canada, became a mighty missionary power, and tens of thousands of savages filled the forests and the rolling prairies at sun-down with hymns to St. Joseph, the praises of the foster-father of our Lord.*

But what has this to do with the Blessed Sacrament? Much every way. For this same sense of the faithful, nay the voice of authority also, have marked this devotion as a special one for priests, and that simply because of their relation to the Blessed Sacrament. Of the small number of devotions to St. Joseph which have been indulgenced by the Holy See, two are for priests only.† The one to be said before mass speaks "not only of seeing and hearing Jesus, but of carrying Him, kissing Him, clothing Him and taking care of Him," and then says, "O God ,who hast given unto us a royal priesthood, grant that as Blessed Joseph deserved reverently to touch with his hands and carry Thine Only-begotten Son born of the Virgin Mary, we too may so serve at Thine altars;" and again in the collect called "The Efficacious Prayer," also indulgenced by Pius VII. for priests only, St. Joseph is spoken of as the keeper of the Virgins Jesus and Mary, and the models of our ministration to Them both. But look at the parallel between St. Joseph and the Catholic priesthood. Was he the steward of God's House? so are they. Was he the dispenser of God's gifts, as the Church calls him? so are they. Was he the keeper of the Bread of life? so are they. Did he handle, carry, lift up, and

* The Bishop of Buffalo, Mgr. Timon, told me that when he laid the foundation-stone of his new cathedral in that city, all his school-children were gathered round him, and at his bidding sang the Oratory hymn to St. Joseph.

† See the Roman Raccolta.

lay down the Body of Jesus? so do they. If Jesus was subject to him, so is He, and even more wonderfully, to them. If he kissed Jesus, they may not be so bold, but they kiss the paten where He lay yesterday, and is to lie to-day. If he washed and clothed Jesus, they in this must stand a little further off, and wash the sacred vessels and napkins, and clothe His pyx, and veil His tabernacle, and adorn His flower-girt throne. What are exposition, procession, benediction, communion, locking and unlocking the tabernacle, carrying the Blessed Sacrament to the sick, but so much imitation of what Joseph did to the Child Jesus? Only that what was his solitary prerogative, now belongs to multitudes of priests, and that the mystery of consecration is a kingdom of wonders, beyond our sight into which the shadow of Joseph cannot reach, but where Mary, and the Holy Ghost, and the great primeval work of Creation, alone come with their similitudes. But the inventive genius of Christian art in its aptest and most felicitous inspirations could find no picture of what we do with the Blessed Sacrament more accurate or more comprehensive than the mysteries of Joseph. Thus the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament meets and takes up the two great devotions to Mary and Joseph, in its connection with the Sacred Infancy to which they both belong. It was to be expected beforehand from the nature of things that the Blessed Sacrament would be the universal devotion of the Church; and therefore we need not be surprised at these various traces of peculiar connection between it and the other devotions of the Church. They show us how far special devotions are from being mere prettiness and ornaments of the Catholic system, and how irreverent it is in temper, and untheological in mind,

to contrast them with other things, as if those only were solid and fruitful, these empty and merely odoriferous at the best. They all hang together. Orthodox doctrine is bound up with them, and the honour of Jesus implicated in them; and the mortification which is anything better than the austerity of a stoic or a fakir, is that which comes from the loving imitation of Jesus, and from it alone.

SECTION VI.

BETHLEHEM, EGYPT AND NAZARETH.

If we pass from the great devotions connected with the Sacred Infancy to its own details and minute circumstances, we still find the same striking picture of the Blessed Sacrament. What our Blessed Lord allowed to happen to Himself in the days of His childhood, He allows to happen to Himself daily in His sacramental life. The Creator of the world lay as a weak Babe in the manger, and the irrational creatures, the patient ox, the despised ass, stood where the kings of the earth did not deserve to be. They gazed fearlessly with their meek, unintelligent eyes on the veiled majesty of the Eternal. They warmed His cold limbs with their neighbourhood and their breath. Just so He lies upon the altar, and the lights twinkle round Him, and the flowers shed their fragrance and wither away before Him, and the curls of sweet smoke from aromatic gums rise up daringly to His throne, and entwine themselves amid the rays of His monstrance, and dim the crystal of His home, and leave their odour upon His veil. All that is little, simple, innocent, is gathered for Him out of His own creation, and put to attend on Him, as it was in His Nativity. In

Bethlehem He slept; and Mary and Joseph saw the closed eyes, and heard the regular breathing, and watched all the graceful circumstances of childhood's sleep. Nothing could be more complete than His seeming inobservance. For awhile it looked, as if the cold and the misery of the cave were buried for Him in a happy oblivion, the outer world cut off from Him, the current of bitter thought sundered in twain, and the awful omnipresence, so to call it, of His prescience suspended in an infant's light but refreshing slumber. But no! beneath that breast the heart is awake though the body sleeps. Beneath those restful eyelids the terrific vision of Calvary is strong and clear, and fierce as in the hours of vigilance. Sleep has touched not the operations of His commanding reason, where ineffable acts of sacrifice, religion, merit, and dignity, are being multiplied with every one of the precipitate pulsations of the new-born Babe. Just so in the tabernacle. There He sleeps in the embrace of a mystical death. He debars Himself from the use of His senses. He sees not with His eyes, He hears not with His ears; He stretches not forth His hands, nor do His lips part to speak, neither does the incense strike upon His sense of smell. But He is there under the species governing the world, dispensing grace, and living a multiform life which it baffles our words to tell, and our love to worship worthily.

But let us leave Bethlehem. The cold starlight is over the great desert, and the chill breeze of morning is circulating freshly over its vast fields of dew-damped sand. God is a little spot, a speck in the horizon of His own wilderness. He has come whom the world has unutterably yearned for these thousands of years, and now,

though His beautiful presence has been but a few weeks among them, He has to fly like a fugitive from His own creatures. Borne in St. Joseph's arms He leaves the land where for centuries He has been doing wonders of grace and mercy, and He seeks to hide Himself in the darkest recesses of idolatrous Egypt. To the world's eye St. Joseph is in an attitude of guilt and shame. He is flying before the powers of the world to save the Child whom a king's ordinance has doomed. Mary's heart is full to overflowing. She knows, as never apostle knew, as never doctor of the Church has known yet, the excessive beauty of her Child; and now the world, instead of drawing towards Him, throws Him off from its skirt as a troublesome and undesirable thing. For Himself He rests passively in St. Joseph's arms. He lets the cold wind of the desert meet Him in the face, till His tender limbs tremble in the cold. The vivid, glaring sun rains out its intolerable light upon the sparkling sands, and Jesus is painfully dazzled by the burning reflection. The bubbling of the infrequent fountain is pleasant to His ear with a human pleasantness; and the cool shade of the palm is grateful to its own omnipotent Creator. What a mystery is all this! Vary all the conceivable circumstances of that flight, and what volumes upon volumes of devotional theology they will give out. All that art has imagined, or that poetry has sung, all that the world knows of epic grandeur, or lyric pathos, what is it to the beautiful and the sublime of our Saviour's Infant Flight?

But look at that wild and lawless modern town.* The people are up in arms. The frightful spirit of sedition has gathered together its reckless masses, who have lost

* Described from some American papers of the day.

their individual consciences for the moment in the excitement of multitude. They have gathered round a Catholic chapel. Their gestures are those of madmen, their cries the yells of angry savages. There is not a trace of education left in them, not a vestige of moral restraint, not a gesture of gentle feeling. The very traces of civilization are obliterated, as by a deluge, from that barbarian horde. The dark spirit, who is God's enemy, has swept into their minds; he has possessed their souls; he boils in their blood; he thinks in their brain. They throw themselves with axe and fire upon the sanctuary of God: they are burning to massacre the Innocent who lies upon its altar. Wending through the crowd, fearful and in disguise, though with intrepid soul, is the priest of God. He makes no effort to stay the frenzied populace. Not a word to dissuade them from their black design. His end is to escape notice, to seem, now as if he were one of them, and now as if a passenger importunely hindered as he goes along the street. He is flying with Jesus. For himself he would willingly court martyrdom. But he bears his Lord. Jesus is among those blinded wild beasts. They brush against Him, press rudely upon Him, thrust His little silver home against the bosom of His priest, who is flying with Him from the sacrilege. It is now, in the streets of that city of the Western Republic, whose name it would be ungenerous to record, as it was when the people of Capharnaum would fain have taken our Lord and cast Him headlong from the rock on which their city was built; He passed through the midst of them and they saw Him not. Or, once more, look in the streets of London. The streams of public vehicles are meeting and passing, the equipages of the rich and noble dashing by,

the pavements crowded to rudeness and discomfort, and a thousand signs of a powerful and corrupt civilization glittering in the windows. A priest is threading his difficult way amid it all, with his eyes cast down, and a look of bashfulness about him which they who notice him account a consciousness of guilt. His Roman collar betrays him, and to many, as he passes along, is he a source of bitter thought and of unkindly suspicion. Many a curse is laid on him that he knows not of, and God is commuting them into blessings. Here and there one of the poor Irish salute him and do him reverence. He returns not the salute; he answers not so much as a Benedicite; and they, alone of all that crowd, they know thereby, that he is flying with our Lord to the sick and dying, like Joseph through the streets of Heliopolis, and they stop and turn and look back till he is out of sight, and they think a thought and breathe a prayer, which are more to God than the wealth and art and politics and all the changes of ministry in that royal Babylon. They, the Irish outcasts of haughty protestantism, the ragged pariahs of proud and heartless London, they alone have eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts to love and minds to understand and illuminated souls to worship and adore. Where is the antitype of these pictures, but in the Infant Flight?

But let us return from Egypt. What a mystery is that fresh hiding of Himself in the Holy House of Nazareth and Loretto! The Redeemer of the world is seemingly inactive, as if He were capable of some uncertainty of purpose, or as if the prospect made Him draw back and delay, or as if He were so delighted with the dear human nature which He had condescended to assume, that He could not tear Himself away from the consecrated

walls which had witnessed the stupendous mystery. Theology and devotion can people that obscurity with wonders. But we must not delay upon them now. Look at Him simply so far as He was known and unknown in that quiet town of Nazareth. Mary knew Him, as none have known Him since. Joseph knew Him and adored Him, even while by the ordinance of God his humility was mastering itself to command Him. St. Elizabeth when she came there knew Him. The young Evangelist St. John, and others perhaps with him, were attracted to Jesus they knew not why. They felt pure and holy and good while they were with Him. His lips dropped wisdom and love. His tears were music. His manners like some wonder of heaven, tranquillizing, awe-inspiring, attractive. The atmosphere around Him was charmed. It was in itself a preparation for Messias. There were outer circles still where He was looked at as He followed Joseph to his shop or Mary to the well. These thought Him strange. The sight of Him cast their minds back perforce on Hebrew glories, and people quoted scripture about Him almost unconsciously. Everything He did, or most things, were prognostics. If they lived they should expect to hear of Him in times to come. Others saw Him, and to them He was all very well; but what was there extraordinary? It was good not to exaggerate about Him. He was too quiet, shy, reserved, silent, as a child, to make a hero when a man. It was enough for Mary that she was the Mother of an inoffensive son, who would never bring trouble to her heart nor shame to her home. Others again were piqued at what they deemed the discreet notice taken of Him. They were of such tempers as to be vexed because He was admired, and to

depreciate Him because He was praised. They were of that overwhelmingly numerous class to whom the excellence of others is really a mental and physical discomfort. Upon the whole it was with the Child then, as it was with the Man afterwards; the Prophet had not honour in His own country. Now change Nazareth into the world, the Holy House into a Catholic Church, His room into the Tabernacle, the Child into the Host; there is the same hiddenness, the same secresy, the same intimate sweetness, the same exterior reception varying from faithful praise to kindly doubt, from contemptuous neglect to angry belief. Both as far as He is known and as far as He is unknown, how faithful the copy, how wonderful the parallel!

We may pass from the different mysteries and details of His Infancy to the states in which He vouchsafed to be during it, and still there results the same analogy with the Blessed Sacrament. His state of poverty in the adorable Host equals, if it does not exceed, the poverty of Bethlehem, of Egypt, and of Nazareth. He is shorn of everything, so shorn that it is a great act of faith to believe that He is there at all, or can submit to what the Catholic doctrine involves respecting His sacramental life. If the world was scandalized at the littleness of the Incomprehensible and Immense within the dimensions of an Infant, what will it be at His littleness in the Host where he exists without any dimensions at all! When He clothed His radiant and flashing majesty with the flesh and blood of a puny Child, and hid in tiny, perplexed, and entangled fingers the Incorporeal Right Hand that wields the thunder, and swings huge solar systems up in the loose void of homeless space, it was a meanness

of disguise which struck Isaias with holy stupor when he beheld the word of God, long as eternity, broad as perfection, deep as omnipotence, thus "abbreviated"* in a Virgin's Womb and on a Mother's lap. How much more incomparably mean this new disguise of Bread and Wine? If the obedience of the Omnipotent and His subjection to Joseph were mysteries which marvellously rebuke our human pride and the conceit of our free will, is not His state in the Blessed Sacrament eminently and above all other things a state of obedience, obedience to His own words, to His priests, nay, to the very accidents of the substance whose place He has taken, the subjection, may I dare to say it? of His Soul to His Body, of His divine to His human nature, by the force of consecration? And as to the state of helplessness, who would venture to compare even the helplessness of the Infant with the helplessness of the Host? And as His state of dereliction at His Nativity was such that He had only Mary and Joseph by His Manger, as afterwards Mary and John by His Cross, so here how often has He but the priest and his server in attendance on Him? And if, by His own will, He was deserted by His angels on the Cross, yet as His dereliction in His Infancy included not the heavenly host, who sang aloud in the sky, proclaiming His Nativity, so neither does His dereliction in the Blessed Sacrament extend to the holy angels who are round Him ever in thickly wreathed choirs of spiritual beauty, with the souls of saints who in lifetime have loved with a peculiar love to haunt the tabernacle. So that here we have a parallel with the Infancy, in a matter

* Verbum abbreviatum.

where the Infancy is distinguished from the Passion, where He Himself held back the eager legions of angels, and suffered but one solitary and O! how deeply favoured spirit to console Him in the garden, as if to show it was His will, not their coldness, which made them mute, inactive, and invisible in the noontide darkness upon Calvary.

Now, at the risk of repetition, let me ask you to look back upon these Devotions, Mysteries, and States of the Sacred Infancy: and when you see how like they are to the Devotions, Mysteries, and States of the Blessed Sacrament, omit not to notice how in each one of them the Blessed Sacrament first comes up to the Sacred Infancy, and then goes beyond it. If He dwelt in one Womb, He has dwelt in millions of Tabernacles; and if He dwelt there for nine months, He has dwelt here for ages. If He was hidden in one Holy House, He hides now in countless Churches. If He had two seats whereon He vouchsafed to rest, Joseph's arm and Mary's knee, He rests now in the hands of numberless priests, and on the tongues of daily multitudes. If Mary showed Him to the shepherds and the kings, His priests show Him often, to mingled crowds of bad and good. If He were incarnate once, He has been consecrated in the mystery of Transubstantiation numberless and simultaneous times. If He once caused the Baptist to exult by His imparted sweetness, He has done so to millions at benediction and in communion, and to the same souls over and over again. If He was once in a manger and between animals, hiddenly, He has been openly upon a thousand altars amid His creatures. If He slept so many given hours in the Sacred Infancy, what are they to the hours He has slept

His mystic sleep in the pyx? He fled once into Egypt with Joseph; He has fled with His priests from sacrilege or to the sick times out of number. If His poverty in the Blessed Sacrament does not exceed, as it does, in actual destitution His poverty at Bethlehem, it has this pre-eminence, that whereas Bethlehem was His first choice of poverty, now He has been enriched with the glory of His resurrection, Ascension and Session, and yet, so enamoured is He of that state, that He goes out of His way to make choice of it a second time in the Blessed Sacrament. If He was little as an Infant, at least He had the commensurable dimensions of an Infant; in the Host He has no dimensions at all; He neither measures, extends, nor weighs. His meanness of disguise we have already seen to be more complete in the Blessed Sacrament, and His abandonment more utter. If He was obedient to one Joseph, He is here obedient to thousands of priests, and comes from heaven at their bidding, and runs swiftly, nay, in one indivisible moment, through a scale of unequalled miracles, at Five Words from them. And as to helplessness as an Infant, the very sign of it, the Infant's cry, was a power which the Blessed Sacrament has not. There He has abjured even the power of complaining.

It will be remembered that among the observations which gave rise to this lengthened parallel between the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacred Infancy there were two which deserved to have particular stress laid upon them. One was the fact, that the Church appointed the Preface of the Nativity as the Proper Preface for the Masses of the Blessed Sacrament, and had several times in the hymns and office of Corpus Christi alluded significantly

to the Sacred Infancy. It was partly therefore the example and practice of the Church which indicated this particular course of inquiry. And we are now in a condition to consider the objection which St. Thomas puts to himself in the Summa, and which will still further illustrate this ritual teaching of the Church. If, he says, the Eucharist is the renewal of the Passion and Sacrifice of Christ, why is it not that on Good Friday, the annual and solemn commemoration of the Passion, there is no consecration, whereas on Christmas Day, when we have no memorial of the Passion, we have the singular custom of three masses? He replies that the Eucharist, as a Sacrifice, renews the Sacrifice on Calvary, and therefore on the day when the actual and bloody Sacrifice took place, the Church, by a beautiful instinct, forbids the unbloody immolation of Christ upon her altars. But in order that on no one day she might be deprived of the sacramental fruits and effects of the Passion, she has the Mass of the Presanctified, the already consecrated Host offered and consumed for the Church by the priest, and without the reservation of the Precious Blood, because on Good Friday the Blood was separated from the Body, and because it is in a special sense "the image of the Lord's Passion." But he finds a peculiar fitness in the triple celebration of mass on Christmas Day, because of the remarkable connection between the Blessed Sacrament and the Nativity, a connection wider than the one here indicated between the Eucharist and the Sacred Infancy. For he says that Christ has three nativities, His Eternal Nativity in the Bosom of the Father, represented by the midnight mass, with its appropriate Introit; His spiritual Nativity in the souls of His elect, and this is represented

by the mass of the Aurora, when Christ, the morning star to use St. Peter's expression, is born in our hearts; and finally His temporal and corporal Nativity at Bethlehem, which is celebrated in the third Mass, whose Introit announces that now unto us the Child is born, while, most deeply and most naturally, its Gospel leads us back to the Eternal Generation of the Word. This connection then between the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacred Infancy is not a fancy, or a piece of poetic imagery; but it is true in the nature of things, and has been apprehended by the Church, and beautifully embodied in these ritual arrangements.

But the authority of the Church was not all, though it was of course abundantly sufficient. The second observation on which stress was laid was the fact, that God was pleased to allow frequent apparitions in connection with the Blessed Sacrament, and in almost all the cases, or in by far the greater number of them, the appearances which the Saints have seen have been those of infants. So it seemed as if God Himself indicated the connection between the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacred Infancy. For several reasons this observation must now be dwelt upon at greater length, and these apparitions explained.

There is no depth in creation which is shrouded with a more divine and impenetrable secresy than the residence of Jesus beneath the accidents of the consecrated Host. He has drawn close the pavilions of His tent, so that none can see Him, and has made purposely for Himself a supernatural darkness which the most subtle vision is utterly unable to penetrate. Take the most practised eye of any one of God's greatest saints, expert in visions and extasies and in all the sights and sounds,

the apparitions and locutions of mystical theology; let it be purified with the most unheard of mortifications, and fortified with a celestial light; and all is in vain. It can see nothing. There is no possible power of vision which can be given to it, that will enable it to see our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Let death come; let all the restrictions of this life, and its imperfect use of the senses, pass away; let the resurrection of the just be anticipated for that saint, and let his body bloom in no common measure with the gifts of glory, and the brilliant awakening of unknown senses and of marvellous dormant powers, and let the light of glory, the lumen gloriæ, the medium in which the Blessed Trinity is visible, float like an atmosphere about the glorified Saint; and yet His corporal eye can see in the Host no more than ours. It is not gifted to pierce that veil. The eye of the Immaculate Mother herself is turned upon the Blessed Sacrament, and meets only the clouds and darkness that are round about our Lord. The Body of Jesus in its own species at the Right Hand of God she sees and adores and feeds her gaze upon; but the same Body under the sacramental species she beholds not. The angels have no vision by which they can discern it; like the Blessed, they see it only by intelligence in their vision of the Divine Essence. The devils know it, feel it, fear it, are stupefied by it; but they cannot profane the sanctuary of that incomparable darkness. Some doctors have thought that even by the absolute power of God no corporal eye could be strengthened to behold our Lord, living visibly unextended, beneath the accidents. His own eye alone beholds Himself, for it is there with Him beneath the veil; yet even there, St. Thomas ven-

tures to say that it sees not the manner in which our Lord is and lives under the species.* To see Him there is the prerogative of faith. Faith is to us what our Lord's eye is to Himself; perhaps it is more, for faith, if it tells not all, tells much of the manner of His sacramental being.

But if this be so, if the seal of this secresy be never broken, what is to be said of these apparitions? Do they not break the secret? Are they not our Lord Himself? Most certainly they are not. Are they then unreal? As certainly not. They are most real, and yet they are not our Lord; and they leave inviolate and intact the mysterious laws of the Blessed Sacrament.† See how this comes to pass. It is a law of the Sacrament that as soon as the sacramental species cease to exist, the Body of our Lord ceases to exist beneath them. Thus, if He were to break through the species and show Himself as a veritable Infant, with the accidents of an Infant and its dimensions, He would cease to be in the Blessed Sacrament, and the Host out of which He had thus broken forth would cease to be the Blessed Sacrament, in virtue of His own law. The apparition therefore is not our Blessed Lord Himself. Again, wherever our Lord's Body is, it is in one of two ways, either in His own proper species in heavenly glory, or without dimensions under the sacramental species, and under the sacramental species He is as He was the day He ascended

* In another place St. Thomas distinctly teaches that our Lord saw Himself under the species on the evening of Holy Thursday. See Book IV.

† For instances of these apparitions see Thyræus de Apparitione Christi Sacramentali usitata et peregrina, Cologne, 1605.

into heaven. Hence if He appeared as a veritable Infant, He would appear under a third species, which is impossible. He was once an Infant, but He is not so now, either in His proper species in heaven or under the species of the Sacrament; for if He were under the sacramental species as an Infant, the whole truth of the Sacrament would be destroyed; and it is named preeminently the sacrament of truth. The apparition therefore is not our Lord Himself. Once more, — whatever is in the Blessed Sacrament and beneath the species is there by consecration and transubstantiation. This infant which is seen, with its flesh and blood, has never been converted into the Body and Blood of Christ. It is not there by consecration and therefore it is not veritable. Finally, then, the apparition is not our Lord Himself.

How, then, does it come to pass? There are two sorts of apparitions; and both of them true, supernatural, and divine, the handiwork of God. First of all, God by His absolute power can make such an impression on the senses of His servant, that, while others see the usual whiteness, roundness, thinness and quantity of the sacramental species, he beholds a beautiful vision of the Babe of Bethlehem, presented to him by the divine will; and it is no deceit; for as St. Augustine says, a fiction which is referred to a signification is not a falsehood, but a figure of the truth. Or, again, when it is God's will that a whole multitude should behold this vision, instead of miraculously impressing their senses, He may please to change all the accidents of the Host, its commensurable quantity excepted, which is the root and support of all

the accidents,* and may convert them into this appearance; and thus the laws of the Sacrament are not injured, falsified, or fundamentally disturbed, the dimensions remaining inviolate. Hence it follows that this infant is not an object of Divine Worship; nor if blood were to drop from the Host, as has repeatedly happened, and were preserved, could it be treated otherwise than we should treat a robe or fringe or sandal of our Lord. We could not fall down and worship it, as we must have done a drop of Blood flung from the scourge or curdled on the crown of thorns in the triduo of the Passion, before our Lord had re-assumed it on Easter morning. Thus, as appearances of flesh and blood are astounding evidences of the truth of the Blessed Sacrament, these apparitions of an infant are literally types, figures of its spirit, manifestations of its sweetness, disclosures of the devotional character which it is apt to form. The Blessed Sacrament blossoms as it were, and the product is not a passion-flower, but the little slender white ornament of our hedgerows, which the peasants in the north of England call the Star of Bethlehem.

SECTION VII.

ALTAR-FLOWERS.

THE devotions then to the Sacred Infancy and to the Blessed Sacrament have one and the same spirit. The

* This is the Thomist view, and is put forward by the angelical doctor as diminishing the number of miracles in Transubstantiation. There are very strong arguments, however, against the other accidents being supported on the commensurable quantity, and I have not been able to convince myself of the truth of the Thomist view.

question follows, What is that spirit, or in other words, what are the peculiar flowers and fruits by which these devotions make themselves known in the spiritual life, and what are the particular graces which they have an especial gift to convey? All the mysteries of our Lord bring forth in us certain fruits, and different mysteries differ in the greater or the less degree in which they bear them. Thus we cannot fix our eyes and hearts upon any part of the Incarnation without the royal spirit of mortification and self-sacrifice passing into us. Jesus, in every shape and under every view, is the doctor of penance and mortification. Whatever else He teaches, that goes along with every lesson. Every lesson presupposes it, and reacts back upon it. Except a man take up his cross daily and so follow Jesus, he cannot follow Him at all. Neither is it enough that the mortifications should come upon him from without. There must be mortifications also of his own seeking. Neither is it enough that they should be interior mortifications only, such as those of the will and feelings; but the flesh must suffer also. There must be bodily mortifications, if the virtue of the Incarnation is to pass into our mortifications at all. And although interior mortifications are in themselves far more valuable, yet at the present time, because of the softness of our ways and the manifold inventions of our effeminacy, it seems more needful to dwell upon outward austerities, inasmuch as without them the practice of interior mortifications is rife with many plausible delusions. But mortification, humility, and meekness, are the flowers of all devotions to the mysteries of our Lord. Those which seem to belong, not exclusively, but very specially, to the

Sacred Infancy and the Blessed Sacrament, are these five: joy, adoration, gratitude, simplicity, and the hidden life.

1. It was a wise thought of Father Lombez, especially when he had fathomed the subject of "Interior Peace," to add his supplemental treatise on Christian joy: neither was it without the guidance of the unerring Spirit that St. Paul enumerates joy among the first of the fruits of the Holy Ghost. It is doing no injury to the mortified character of high sanctity, to say, that joy is one of the most important elements in the spiritual life, and nothing is more common than cases in which persons are kept back from great attainments, or from persevering in their vocations, by the want of joy. They say there was an epoch on this planet of ours when, from the quantity of carbonic acid in the atmosphere, the growth of vegetation was magnificently prolific, rapid, and gigantic. Just so is it in the spiritual life when everything breathes of holy and supernatural joy. It is the atmosphere of heroic virtues. Perhaps we ourselves may have had seasons of such gladness, and now it may be forfeited because we did not correspond to the grace, and on looking back on what we did and what we were then, we almost think we were "giants in those days." Indeed it seems from the constitution of our nature, and more particularly under the law of grace, which is a law of sonship, not of servitude, that joy is almost an indispensable condition of generous or long-sustained action. It is very hard to keep up and continue any practice, however easy in itself, when such practice is based only on a natural motive. It is a constant effort, because of the incurable weakness and besetting languor of our nature in matters spiritual; and hence it is that the sacraments, which tell upon this

weakness and languor, are all of them in a very intimate sense fountains of joy and sweetness to the human heart. Take, for example, the case of prayer, and ask the experience of any number of spiritual persons; and they will tell you that so great and almost unconquerable are the difficulties of the privilege of prayer, and so manifold the repugnances which beset it, that nothing but a spirit of joy enables a man to triumph, to persevere, and to break his way into higher and higher degrees of its perfection. Even interior trials are, for the most part—certain special temporary phenomena of the Saints excepted — accompanied by joy, though it is often very hidden, and as little sensible as it can be consistently with its performing its functions rightly. And it is quite a characteristic of those spiritual writers, who are the most distinguished for a supernatural discretion and an abundant measure of the gift of counsel, that they are very cautious in speaking lightly of sensible devotion and sweetness in prayer, and very slow to admit that the subtraction of it is, in this or that case, a mystical operation of God, and not rather a punishment for infidelities in the spiritual life. Consolation is so much easier than correction, that it is no wonder directors should so much delight in it, especially finding, as they do, the astonishing rarity of disinterested souls who really seek God alone. And many a soul, to its huge loss, is dismissed from the confessional almost proud of a subtraction of sensible devotion which, they are told, implies some special operations of the Holy Spirit in their souls, when they needed salt and vinegar in wounds which over-talking, or a love of pleasure, or a thirst of praise, or a facility to omit their spiritual exercises, or a trifling acidity in their domestic circle, have really caused.

It cannot be too often repeated that it is no honour to holy mortification to think or speak lightly of the sweetness, and the balm, and the fragrance of spiritual joy.

Gentleness and softness, says Surin, were the graces our Lord most desired that we should copy in Himself; and certainly, whether we look at the edification of others, or the sanctification of ourselves, or of the glory our lives may give to God, we shall perceive that nothing can rank in importance before gentleness of manner and sweetness of demeanour towards others. Answer peaceable things with mildness, says the Wise Man, and let there be no acid feeling in thy soul, and thou shalt be as the obedient son of the Most High, and He will have mercy on thee more than a mother. Now it is quite notorious that joy is of all things the one which most helps us in sustaining this equable sweetness towards others. When we are joyful, nothing comes amiss to us. Nothing takes us by surprise or throws us off our guard. Unkindly interpretations of other men's deeds and words seem unnatural to us; and we lose our facility of judging harshly and of suspecting unreasonably. No matter what duty we are unexpectedly called upon to do, no matter what little unforseen disappointments come upon us, no matter what sudden provocations to petulance and irritability assail us, all seems to come right. There is no shadow in our souls under which we can sit and be morose; for the grace of joy is as universal as the strong sunshine of a fine day.

If a tree's roots are fastened so tightly in the tenacious clay that the wind cannot stir them, it will not grow; it will hardly clothe itself with leaves. If its stem is nipped by injudicious ties, it cannot swell in girth. If it is crowded in a dense plantation, it cannot branch forth and

make a pleasant shade, but it shoots up infirm and lank and graceless. So is it with the soul when it wants liberty of spirit. It cannot make room for itself amid its numerous duties and its various avocations. Helps become hindrances, sacraments formalities, fervours scruples, and the order of rule and habit instead of being a facility of expansion, grows into a chain of bondage and pusillanimity. All this is from want of liberty of spirit, that holy supernatural freedom which alone can unite the seemingly incompatible qualities of the spiritual life, giving the reins to the familiarity of love while the hand is firm on the curb of fear, associating with the ready charity, which is disengaged at all hours when wanted, a scrupulous and faithful subjection to the yoke of rule and the regularity of observance. But it is joy alone which can give this liberty of spirit. There are no ways cut and dried by which we can attain it, no discernible degrees by which we can name, distinguish, and mount them one by one, no receipt which is specific for the obtaining of it. It is a spirit, an instinct, a genius, an indefinable grace. It is in fact the operation of spiritual joy, the result of joy, what joy is and produces in the ascetical life.

But these are not the only uses of joy in the spiritual life. The whole fabric of mortification rests upon it. We cherish our joy in order to nurture our mortified spirit, and we practice austerities in order to increase our joy. Even punishment, when it is over, brings forth joy, a joy that without the punishment would never have been; and the more ample and severe the chastisement the keener and more childlike the joy. Is not this what every one says who uses instruments of penance? Self-love is the filth, the squallor, the confinement, the poverty, the de-

pression, the bad air of the spiritual life, and mortification is our emancipation from it all. What wonder it should be so joyous? Did we, like the Galatians, begin well, and run bravely, and are we limping now, and weary, and galled, and out of heart in our career? The morning shone upon us starting; it was cool and fresh: the dew was on the grass, the wind was getting up among the leaves; now all is hot and dusty and disagreeable. No! it is not quite so. This is not the account of the matter. We began with sundry mortifications, and we have left them off. We are ever on the point of resuming them, and never do so. One while we determine to do so, and then lose heart. We grasp our discipline, but there is no nerve in our wrist. We fix the catenella, but either we are a little unwell, or it is hard to hide it, and after all it is such a paltry penance, and so we take it off. Another while, we think of how many years it is since we turned to God; by good rights, if spiritual books speak true, we must be beyond the downright necessity of bodily mortifications, and have entered now into the sphere of purely interior ones, where bodily mortifications are retained less from necessity than from habit, humility, and love. O spiritual books—spiritual books! how many things you are made to answer for. As if the ascetical life were cut up and partitioned off into so many different states and stages, which all souls must pass through and at a given pace, so that we and our directors can look at our books, as a traveller looks at his itinerary and says, Now we have got so far; we are here on the map now: so many miles onwards, so many minutes: just what our calculated speed promised to effect. This makes wild work of asceticism. But we have lost our joy, and we find now

that we cannot get on without it. Self-love has made head again, and the interior caustic will not bite. The remedy is simple enough. Let us go back to our bodily mortifications. Let us bruise our flesh and draw a little of our blood, and we shall be as happy as the day is long. If the saints are such gay sprites, and monks and nuns such unaccountably cheerful creatures, it is simply because their bodies, like St. Paul's, are chastised and kept under with an unflinching sharpness and a vigorous discretion. He that would be joyous, must first be mortified; and he that is mortified is already joyous, with the joy that is of pure, celestial birth.

Such are the ascetical uses and fruits of joy. How much we need it will best be seen by looking at the difficulties which beset the practice of it in our own time and place. There can be no mistake in this. Our times are against joyousness of heart. Our lives are clogged up with material interests and the gaudy triumphs of materialism. The world has got upon an inclined plane, and is spinning down it with a precipitation which affects every one of us: even the Church must feel it, and suffer from it, and be giddy and sick at heart with the haste and hurry and passionate lawlessness of it all. There is no time to be sober, tranquil, cool, or at peace; so there can be no joy. Moreover we are impeded with accumulated business. Every one has half a hundred vocations, and does not even seem to be discharging the relative duties of his social position if he has them not. We have all twenty times more work to do than we can do well, and ten times more work than we can do at all. How does all this tell upon prayer, upon standing still and kneeling down to prepare for sacraments, upon time

spent in profitable reviews of past life, upon the frequent, and longer still and longer resting of the soul on God's Perfections? No! in these latter days the effort of life is grown quite inexorable. We are falling under the strain of it day after day, and the fountain of joy never was sunk so low. The smile of the free heart and the overflowing frank eye of the unburdened conscience, how do they comport with the grim neatness and the convulsed purpose and the rigid model-like anxiety and preoccupied concentration of the faces of a London morning pavement, when the stream of worshippers moves citywards to the shrine of the world's activity?

The character of our country is as fatal to joy as the spirit of our time. O that unholiday look of English countenances, how sad it is! All life is a forcing of one's way through a dense crowd, where everybody else is forcing his way in the same direction. The overcrowded platform of the island is like the deck of a foundering ship. There is no order and little hope, a thousand cries and a world of useless effort; one law only is acknowledged, one power alone supreme, and that is self-preservation. We are prosperous, but we do not enjoy our prosperity. It is so absorbing that it draws into its vortex those that are far off, as well as those that are near. It is felt in the seminary and feared in the convent, far as they are from Change, and hundreds of miles and millions of leagues distant in sympathy from the Standard on Cornhill. Merry England! what a mockery there is in that old historic name, which records, like some ancient monument, the joyousness of the old faith and the mother church! We have no joy now, but that dreadful joy which those who love

danger feel, when they wantonly throw themselves in its way. We have joy after a sort, but it is in the excitement and the intensity of an earnestness, which is for all other conceivable ends, but which is not for God.

The circumstances also in which we, as Catholics, are placed in this vortex, tell equally against the wholesome exercise of Christian joy. The neighbourhood of heresy is darkening, chilling, and depressing: and we cannot escape from its numbing effects and consequences. Hence it comes to pass that we ourselves are often not what we ought to be, and are at all times in this country, if not our only, at least our own worst enemies. We are depressed also from our own many wants and deficiencies, which it is beyond our power to supply, and yet which seem to be crying up to heaven as if they were so many scandals. Or we are out of heart, and must be so, from the perseverance of dislike and prejudice, from the daily new discoveries of dishonour and disingenuousness and shameless untruth, even of the better sort that war against us, or from the inexorable Egyptian task of over-work, or from the enfeebling wretchedness of isolation, or from the constant tantalizing defeat that seemed almost victory, as our wants and works increase unmanageably just as we seemed by superhuman efforts to be satisfying their hunger, taming their madness, and bringing them beneath control. We live in a continual disproportion between wants and means, and ever to have done, ever to be satisfied, ever to sit down and rest is sin, or something so like it as to make us conscience-stricken and miserable. All these things are against us, as Jacob said of old But why have I spoken of these obstacles to joy? Because I

suppose the difficulty of practising the grace may be taken as an index of its importance and our necessity. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament will give us one thing which we greatly need, the gift and grace of joy in Jesus Christ.

2. Another want is adoration: and this is the second flower of the double devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacred Infancy. The spirit of heresy and the spirit of the world are both alike a spirit of levity and frivolity; whereas the spirit of the Church is one of tranquil seriousness, and of profound and dignified adoration. Even the worship of God, in heretical and schismatical bodies, becomes either on the one hand formal, cold, conceited and inexpressive, or on the other, vulgar, coarse, impertinent and forward; and both of these noxious spirits kill souls in their own way. The one is more respectable in its operation, but not the less deadly; the other holds more good in solution, yet makes greater moral havoc in the souls it at once debauches and degrades. Opposed to both these is the Catholic spirit of adoration. Now look into the world, measure the times, scan their symptoms, question their developments; and is it conceivable that even the builders of stately Babel should have less adoration about them, less of the genius of worship, than the men of our day? Were God's rights ever so narrowed? Was the world ever so unleavened with godly things? Was ever the self-dependence of Satan's kingdom more arrogantly asserted or more balefully triumphant?

But we shall see this better by examining first the spirit of adoration, and seeing wherein it consists. It may be said to comprehend seven visions of God. First

of all, it is seeing Him everywhere. No corner so dark, no occupation so unlikely, no interest so thoroughly worldly, but adoration sees God manifest in it, and kneels down there to worship Him. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. This spirit acknowledges the dominion of evil nowhere, nowhere leaves the devil to himself or in possession, withdraws from no ground, but everywhere plants God's banner, and everywhere makes open acknowledgment of His universal sovereignty. Secondly, it sees God great everywhere. It discerns the intrinsic grandeur of all His operations and all His permissions. He consecrates everything. His presence is magnificence. Thus this spirit makes no compromises with the world. It gives up nothing, because nothing to its eye is small enough that it should dare to give it up or barter it away. God has touched it, and lo! it has swelled to dimensions of vastness and of dignity, and has outgrown all terrestrial room. On this account its seriousness can make light of nothing. Thirdly, it sees God so as to appreciate Him everywhere. God is to its eye not only great in everything, but He is Himself the greatness of everything. He is also the worth of everything, and the preciousness of all things. Hence it puts such a price on God as to depreciate all else but Him; and in this is its delight; because the worthlessness of all created things lights up with such glorious splendour, the worth, the sole worth, the exceeding worth, of God and of what is God's. Fourthly, it sees Him first everywhere. He is the first object that strikes the eye, the first wherever the eye lights; or if it is not so, from some dimness in the eye itself, it seeks Him out and has no rest, and notices nothing else, until it has found Him.

Then it takes the interpretation of all it sees from Him, consults first His will, seeks first His kingdom, legislates first for His interests; and until all this is done, it has taken neither height nor measure of what else may be in that place. Fifthly, it sees Him last everywhere. It takes leave of no duty without seeing that God has had His due. It leaves no place without ascertaining how His interests are left there. When all else is consumed and exhausted, it still sees God in the empty temple. Through the veil of all other things, and after the distraction of their gay bewilderment, its pacific eye is still to the last on God, the end, the sum, the total, the result of all things, and His own infinite Self besides. Sixthly, it sees Him near everywhere. To the spirit of adoration God is always at hand. God touches it, holds it up, and lets it lean upon Him. It has always ready means of glorifying God; passing word, present work, the opened lip, the falling eye, the outstretched hand, all can glorify God instantaneously and continuously; because He is close by always. No time is spent in searching, nor labour lost in calculating. The little details of hourly privacy, they are all sacraments, all real presences; for God is in them all; and there is only one species under which adoration never sees Him, and that is as some object very far off. Seventhly, it sees Him interfering everywhere. God is no idol or image to it: no convenient, passive object of external reverence, to which it can bow or kneel, and then pass on and do its own will and follow its own way. Prayer at stated times, and incense morn and eve, these, if these only, are a mockery in the sight of adoration. To its eye God's dominion is the substance and the entity of all things that exist.

Consequently its eye is purged to see Him interfering everywhere, making claims and asserting rights every hour, laying His Hand on all things and stamping His mark upon all things, and insisting all day long, that at least in heart and attitude men should do public homage to Him for the usufruct of the very air they breathe and the very blood they live by. Adoration knows nothing of an otiose Providence: in its esteem the dignity of God and the lovingness of God lie in these momentary interferences; and it is looking ever to God, as the child looks to his father where two paths diverge, and it waits for His Hand, softly, and to all but watchful love imperceptibly, to turn it into the way He would have it go. These are the seven visions of God. Blessed is the gifted seer who gazes on them uncloudedly his whole life long! His ways shall be in security, and his heart in heavenly peace!

Now let us look out into the world, and see how far it looks like a society of creatures living, and consciously living, under the eye of their Creator, His will their rule, His beauty their loadstone, His glory their reward, His praise and blame their measure of right and wrong. God's glory, it must be remembered, is in the continuity and the universality of His interference, and the worship of His creatures is the recognition of His right to interfere. What idle words these seem! What is there in the world at all answering to them? How far is the conduct of men in any way a mirror of the One Living Being in Three Divine Persons? Literature is the flower and beauty of human intellect; and what is God to literature, but an ornament at best? There is beauty in art, pathos in drama, sublimity in poetry, and admiration in history,

which are not after His laws, nay, are what He expressly disallows. God's place in literature is æsthetical, scenic, theatrical, and nothing more. Philosophy allows for Him as an element of consideration and calculation in His own world, and more often as a disturbing force than otherwise. He is a difficulty which has to be dealt with, an objection which has to be answered: and alas! philosophy has felt more or less irritability in meeting both the difficulty and the objection. Science is occupied upon Him. But it ignores His personality, His life, His character. It deals with Him as a code of legislation, as an ancient manuscript, or a disinterred megatherium. It manipulates Him as a thing, a law, a cause, or a power that has strewn the subterraneans of creation with manifestations of design. Politics have their own way of looking at Him. To them He is a fellow power, to be feared for the brute force it has in it or the wily diplomacy, to be dreaded one while as barbarian and another while as insinuating and astute. He is a state far off, who has hardly a right to come into the horizon of politics or to meddle with the nicely adjusted balance of power, an oriental shah, very grand and very worshipful, but with whom it does not appear that we have any very direct concern, except an occasional interchange of gifts to our own advantage. Politics recognise of Him so much as this, that, existing and being a power, He has a right to be consulted when He has a right to be interested. But it does not appear that that is of very frequent occurrence. Society at large regards Him as a stately topic of misty consolation and convenient bounty to its friends, and as an affair of exquisite police to its enemies. He is a more or less indistinct machine of rewards and punishments,

by no means adequate to the whole work of government and order, but on the whole trustworthy and perhaps indispensable. This is the world's view of God, its five divisions of its Omnipotent and Lifegiving Creator!

But how does our own spiritual life stand the comparison with those seven visions of Catholic adoration? I am not speaking of our unforgetfulness of God, but of our very recognition of Him. Is it not wanting in fear, in reverence, in silence, in amazement, in abjection, and because in these things, therefore in love also, and righteous intimacy, and affectionate delight? Listen to Ecclesiasticus, to that one chapter which is headed "All wisdom is from God," and see how far its hymn-like language suits our ordinary devotion. "The fear of the Lord is honour, and glory, and gladness, and a crown of joy. The fear of the Lord shall delight the heart, and shall give joy, and gladness, and length of days. With him that feareth the Lord, it shall go well in the latter end, and in the day of his death he shall be blessed. The fear of the Lord is the religiousness of knowledge, it shall give joy and gladness. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and to fear God is the fulness of wisdom, and fulness is from the fruits thereof. The fear of the Lord is a crown of wisdom, filling up peace, and the fruit of salvation. The root of wisdom is to fear the Lord, and the branches thereof are long-lived. The fear of the Lord is wisdom and discipline, and be not incredulous to the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord driveth out sin: for he that is without fear, cannot be justified; for the wrath of his high spirits is his ruin."

Such is the delight and glory of fearing God that we might almost say that fear is the depth of love. The

practical question for ourselves is to consider how far it is the characteristic of our relations with God, how far the spirit of adoration is our spirit, patient, expansive, submissive, profound, intelligent, penetrating, clear of sight, mature in judgment, eloquent in silence, dignified in humility, rejoicing in abasement. Adoration is the supernatural leaven of the creature. Nothing must escape it, nothing refuse it entrance. Not a faculty but it must be steeped in it, not a power but it must be tempered in it, not a sentiment but it must be beautified by it, not an act but it must be animated with it. There is not a recess in our complex nature which must not be visited, searched, and purified with this celestial fire. Nay, it has its proper office even to our flesh. Pierce Thou my flesh with Thy fear, says the Psalmist; for I am afraid of Thy judgments; and when the word of God in the deep night reached the ears of Eliphaz "by stealth" and he received "the veins of its whisper, fear seized upon him and trembling, and all his bones were affrighted and the hair of his flesh stood up." This spirit of adoration should be displayed in understanding, in feeling, in action, in love. The whole attitude of our mind should be full of reverence. In study, in thought, in argument, in persuasion, in reproof, when we speak and when we listen, our understanding should be as it were on the look out for God, vigilant to receive truth, jealous to defend it, quick to perceive the bearing of opinions and judgments upon His glory. For if a man handles the commonest subject, and the name of God be not so much as mentioned, still it is all full of God, tingles with God, breathes of God, shines with God, is fragrant of God. A mind, ever brooding on God, saturated with the thought of God, and to whose reasoning God is

the swift conclusion of all premises, has a science of its own, and is a power on earth to which neither rank nor genius may compare. To exercise adoration in our feelings, our instincts must be so trained, so supple in the hands of grace, that they become full of ready and occult sympathies with God. They must feel Him before He comes, and prophecy of Him when He is yet unseen. They must like and dislike, unerringly, they know not why, and yet the future will show that God's glory was concerned, and that they judged as love and truth and clear light would have had them to judge. Our actions also must be so many lovely-faced kneeling statues, with their hands clasped and their eyes upturned to heaven, full of self-oblivion and beautiful adoration. Every action of a man, whose mind is prayer and his feelings worship, is itself a divine work of art, exceedingly lovely, far before frieze of temple or old Attic sculpture, a study more deeply imbued with the very essence of beauty than all the hallowed remnants of fascinating antiquity. But not mind and feeling and action only must be steeped in adoration, but love itself must be chastened in its self-rebuking fires. As humility is to zeal, so is fear to love. We must so fear that love will reach to highest heaven, and we must so love that fear must be a necessity of our love's life. The very thrills of love must be indistinguishable from the tremblings of fear. When we are startled with love's delightful boldness, when it is hard to believe that so great a God can love so tenderly, when it is a relief to love to hide itself in the exaggerations of humility, when with a heart bursting with tearful hope that He will not hear our prayers, we cry out with Peter to his master, Depart from me, O Lord! for I am a sinful man,—then

is our love safe, then is it pure, then is it holy, then is it full of rest, and a foretaste of the eternal sabbath of the people of God.

And how will all this show itself in daily life? In these three simple ways. We shall do but a few things, burden ourselves with a few responsibilities, engage ourselves in but a few works, pledge ourselves to but a few spiritual exercises: so that we may not be hampered, but make life larger, and have more room for God. How often has St. Francis of Sales told us this, and why have we not listened to him? Then because the chambers of our lives are not crowded with intrinsic furniture, or we ourselves misled by spiritual attachments, we do what we do for God slowly, intensely, and composedly, just as He works Himself; so that independent of our work, our very method of working is worship of Him. And is not the method far more to Him than the work? What are our works to Him? Simply nothing. But our working hearts? Why they should be anything to Him I do not know. But they are. He yearns for them. He pleads for them. He broods over them, like a mother over the little face of her first-born. And finally what we thus do, is done in a finished way, not like Daniel's image, gold and silver, brass and clay, commingled, but all entire and of fine gold, like the actions of Jesus and Mary, and worthy of God. There will be no haste, no incompleteness, no alloy, no slovenliness, no misty matter of venial sin encompassing the bright thing and making it almost more a vehicle of evil than an offering of good. Few, slow, finished,—these are the works of adoration.

3. I mentioned gratitude as the third flower of our devotion; and it is a want as special and as pressing now

as either joy or adoration. Going with modern habits of mind to the perusal of the lives of the saints, it seems almost strange to find gratitude, what we might nearly call the old heathen virtue of gratitude, so prominent a characteristic of the saints. It is one of the marks peculiar to all the saints, but more especially to the founders of religious orders and congregations. They seem to exaggerate the little benefits they have received, and to make as much of them as if they never could pay them off. St. Philip had a marvellously long memory for the most trivial kindnesses. St. Ignatius appears sometimes quite absorbed in them, and passes on the obligations as heirlooms to future generations of his order. The treatment of patrons and founders in the middle ages, and the courteous observances of the Church towards them even at solemn times and in secret places, is a manifestation of the same instinct of sanctity, and is of course closely connected with the spirit of thanksgiving. This is not our way now. A change has come over us which betokens something wrong, whatever it may be.

Perhaps we do less for each other than we used to. Earlier times and simpler forms of society may, like the beginning of colonies, have excelled in other virtues more than we. But this much is plain, that we take benefits far too much as matters of course, and that we lose with God in consequence. We are so beset with the notion of our own rights, the monomania of our times, that it actually disturbs and perplexes our relations with God, and confuses our theology. We have so many rights defined and undefined, and in this country, as an unpopular minority, we fight so disproportionately for them, that we come to look on almost everything which happens to us

as a right. We see this in others, even if we are blind to it in ourselves. We complain again and again that the poor take alms, as if they were rights, not favours. Now if Catholic theology be true, alms are much nearer rights, especially to the very poor, than the favours we receive and count as due to us, and as if we were beholden to nothing for them but our own rank and worth. In these days we canonize self-help as the queen of virtues instead of charity, and this poisons the very fountains of our moral philosophy, and distorts our notions of duty. Then again, the different classes of society are so coldly divided off one from another, not so much blood from wealth, as wealth from mediocrity, and mediocrity from poverty, that it is as if civilization were resolving itself back again into an institution of castes, a state almost worse than promiscuous savagery. And, once more, we do good to each other, either through central associations from which the individual kindness is evaporated and lost, or on so small and niggardly a scale, that there is no scope for a vigorous growth of gratitude. However, from whatever cause, gratitude is not a modern virtue; and the absence of it is one of those modern vices against which we must be specially on our guard when we are trying to train our souls on the model of Catholic sanctity. To some it may appear strange that I should make so much of it and treat it as a separate flower of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. But the lack of it is a grievous fault, and comes of a most unholy temper. If a man were shown me who had a long memory for little kindnesses, who never seemed out of debt in his affections, who exaggerated his obligations to others, kept anniversaries of them, and repaid them twenty times over,

I should be more struck with the likelihood of his turning out a saint, than if I heard that he disciplined himself to blood daily, slept on the bare boards, enjoyed the prayer of quiet, had been scourged by devils, and had seen our Blessed Lady. Alas! we forgot the ten lepers, and the nine that were ungrateful: or in these days of self-praise and self-importance, we are like Ezechias, when God had given him a sign, "he did not render again according to the benefits which he had received; for his heart was lifted up."

But let us look more closely into the importance of gratitude in the spiritual life. God's mercy is the great feature of the two kingdoms of nature and of grace. Now gratitude is man's answer to God's mercy; and just as charity to our neighbour is the best test of our real love of God, so gratitude to our neighbour for his kindnesses to us is a clearer proof of a grateful disposition, than gratitude to God, which is mixed up with so many other cogent considerations. If we realize everything as coming from God, then these benefits are from Him; and they come from Him in the most beautiful and touching way, through the mediation of our brother's human heart inspired by grace. So that every kindness we receive is a little copy of the Incarnation, a miniature of that attractive mystery. Gratitude also is grounded in humility, and, as usual, increases the grace from which it takes its rise. Heroic humility fancies that wrong is the only right which is due to it. The least kindness seems disproportionately great to a keen and delicate sense of our own unworthiness. The wonder is that anybody should be kind to us at all. If they knew us, as we know ourselves, they would have to do holy violence to themselves

to show us common courtesy, as great violence as the saints did to themselves when they licked the ulcers of the lepers. St. Francis Borgia used to walk quickly through the shambles, in unaffected fear lest the butchers should rise upon him and put him to death, as unworthy to encumber the earth of God. This last example however is taking us out of our sphere. We can as little conceive of such humility as of the manner of life an inhabitant would lead in torrid Venus or in watery Jupiter. But it illustrates the gratitude of the saints Again, what warms the heart more to others than the exercise of gratitude? Uncharitableness to a benefactor seems almost an impossibility. Lear's daughters were monsters. Yet think how hard it is to love any one, any single one, with real charity, without judging, without criticism, without censoriousness, extenuating the evil, believing against appearances, magnifying the good, rejoicing in his virtues. It is much if each man has one upon the earth to whom he really feels thus. It is an immense help to his sanctification, a real talent for which he will have account to give. I doubt its being common, at least in its evangelical purity. Gratitude to benefactors is on the road to it, and not far distant. Then again gratitude is so eloquent, so graceful, so persuasive a missioner. It is not only a virtue in ourselves, but it makes others good and virtuous also. It is a blessedly humbling thing to be loved, a veritable abasement to be affectionately respected by those about us. And gratitude makes our benefits look so little that we long to multiply and enlarge them, while it softens our hearts and unties from them all manner of little antipathies, mean jealousies, petty rivalries, and cold suspicions. And, lastly, it is the

proper and normal state of a holy creature to perfect himself under the continual feeling of obligations which he never can repay. This is the relation between the Creator and himself. Meanwhile to all the evil and baser parts of our nature it is a real mortification to have the sense of obligation pressing upon us. It is the sign of a vulgar man, that he cannot bear to be under an obligation. And thus in both ways the sense of obligation is a great part of sanctity. A grateful man cannot be a bad man; and it were a sad thing indeed, if either in the practice or the esteem of this virtue the heathen should surpass the disciples of that grateful Master, who, to the end of time and in the busy pageant of the judgment, will remember and repay the cup of cold water given in His Name.

4. The next peculiar grace of our devotion is that of simplicity. Although simplicity is the most inimitable of the divine perfections, nevertheless the imitation of it is an essential part of holiness, and hence it is now presented to us in the Gospel as "the simplicity which is in Christ." Simplicity aims at one end, seeks one object, is occupied with one work, and loves with singleness of heart. In its relations with God, it puts away all multitude, all capriciousness, all distraction, all attachment; and its strength lies in its unity of purpose and its concentration of effort. In its relations with others, it is gentle, open, fair, without disguise, without insincerity, without flattery, without deceit. Now the more crowded and artificial the world becomes, obviously the more difficult is the practice of simplicity: for it is the reflection of the immutable and spotless truth of God Himself Scripture reveals to us quite in startling languge the in-

tensity of God's hatred of a lie. But there are hundreds of things, which do not amount to lies, but which are contrary to the beautiful perfection of simplicity. There is a speech and a silence, there are looks, manners, permissions, concealments, dubious smiles, pretended inadvertencies, unworthy conventions, and intentional distractions, which grieve the Holy Spirit, and make sad ravages of an interior soul, though they are far short of absolute falsehood. I think it is St. Augustine who says somewhere, that the devil so envied God the possession of His beloved Word, that he strove to mimic the Eternal Generation of the Son and to produce a word himself, which should be as far as was in his power consubstantial with himself, and that he straightway begot a lie; so that a lie is the devil's word, a daring, foul and loathsome image of the Ever-glorious and Only-begotten Son of God. This explains the intensity of God's hatred of a lie. And then the saint, or the old Italian commentator where I found it long ago, goes on to say that God made lying to be but a venial sin, in order to destroy its empire and degrade its power, and because of the facility of the sin and the pressure of the temptations, and in contempt for Satan's craft. This is an exposition of our Lord's name for the devil, the father of lies.

Now all this may be recommended to the notice even of spiritual persons. They offend God and do themselves a mischief by untruth, not in the shape of falsehood, but in the shape of want of simplicity. If you would be perfect, you must be truthful to a scruple. A hair's-breadth of deceit must be to you as if it were a mile of positive untruth. Persons professing to aim at a life of union with God, and whose discretion fails of being su-

pernatural because it falls short of simplicity, are sometimes heard to quote what writers of moral theology teach, about the permissions of equivocations, amphibology, and mental reserve. I wish it could be rudely forced home upon them how shocking this is! Moral theology is not a system of ascetics, or a code of the counsels of perfection. The writers are engaged in showing either what is the very least of good dispositions on which we may rest a reluctant absolution, so as to attract sinners more powerfully to God, and to advance the kingdom of Christ to the furthest limits of sheer possibility, and to carry the Precious Blood to the furthest limit to which it will go, or in explaining for the guidance of the priest how far an action may be imperfect, and what amount of unworthiness it may contain, without being an absolute breach of any of God's laws and so subjecting the offender to certain spiritual punishments and disabilities. They might as well model their kindliness to the poor, sick, and sorrowing around them on the manual of a Justice of the Peace as practise spirituality on a treatise of moral theology. Forgive my repeating it. Get out of these little untruthfulnesses. When a man says in defence of himself, It is not a sin, he is making a public profession of abandoning the pursuit of perfection. Remember the maxim of a holy man; Le grand obstacle du progrès spirituel est de ne s'abstenir que de ce qui paroît offense de Dieu, et de faire sans scrupule ce qui se peut faire sans crime.

Furthermore, while I am saying so much as this, I will venture to say somewhat more. Some of the best writers say that when equivocations and mental reserves, even where we seem in strictness to have a right to use them,

are so against the custom and genius of a country that they would have the effect of direct untruth and would weaken the foundations of public faith, we are not at liberty to use them. How far, it may be suggested, does not this render the whole teaching about them inapplicable to the country in which we are living, and to that virtue of truth which, like hope in Pandora's box, seems to many persons (truly or not) to have remained, when all else that was godly made wings to itself and flew away? It is worth a thought. However, even if we are, as other nations find us in diplomacy, and as we Catholics find our fellow-countrymen in parliament and on juries, not altogether as truthful as could be wished, it is plain that we pretend to be truthful, and honour with our praise the virtue we dishonour with our practice; and this is enough to make real scruple about it especially desirable. But of one thing I am quite clear, that many persons aiming at perfection, practising mental prayer, and performing bodily mortifications, come to a dead standstill because of their want of scruple about insincerities far short of untruth. Diplomacy of manner, way, and speech, circuitous routes for courtesy's sake, giving things the wrong names, and being silent when silence is really speech, these things are undoing men's sanctity and causing saints to break in the mould and frustrating beautiful purposes of grace every day; and so subtle is the delusion that when men feel that something is wrong in them but cannot depict it they wake up as it were to some rude, savage theories of misplaced and inopportune fraternal correction, or think to compensate for their cowardly double-dealing and double-tonguedness by the misplaced effusions of a vulgar candour. The devil will turn their attention in any di-

rection rather than the right one. He dearly loves those little plausibilities and diplomacies. They are caverns where he finds congenial darkness, even when the rays of grace are beaming brightest on the soul, and where he lies hid till the splendours have faded into the usual grey twilight of the soul that is but half for God.

All around us is hollow and insincere. The world is so in all ages: how eminently must it be so in a time of great luxury and high civilization! Simplicity is lacking in every department of life. As year glides away after year, it is the great truth which our experience is always teaching, and yet which is ever new to us, because the disappointment is ever raw, that even good people are less true, less frank, less honest, less manly, less noble than we took them to be. We go on trusting, only because it is so intensely miserable not to trust, that we would rather trust and be deceived, than not trust at all. It is the cry which age utters more and more piteously, as time goes on and the hair grows grey, that the beautifulness of truth is departed from among us. For it is a sort of consolation to believe that the time of youth was a golden age and that the world has worsened since. Alas! the gilding that we miss was never there: it was only sunshine that we projected from ourselves. It is hard to exaggerate the want of simplicity which is around us. No one is to his dearest friend what he really is. Let us take ourselves the man whom we most love and revere. How little does he know of us! How little do we let him know of us! How much we give him to understand which in reality is not true! We are acting a part before him. We are weighing our words, exaggerating our sympathies, balancing our judgments, toning our minds to his. We would

not for the world he should know what we really are. There are whole parts of our character curtained off from his observation. We see where his judgment of us is falsely favourable, but we have not the heart to set him right. We cannot trust the strength of his love in the face of our real vileness. Sometimes we hate ourselves for this very deceitfulness; it is so intolerable a thing to be loved for the very virtue, of whose opposite vice we are in fact the slaves. If even friendship is thus conventionally, nay, inevitably and blamelessly insincere, what must the less sacred relations of society be? Take away from social intercourse false praise of others, and half conscious and half unconscious praise of self, and what is left behind? A hateful refuse of uncharitable judgments of others, and nothing more. In one word, wherever we look and on whatever point we bring our scrutiny to bear, all around us is lie, affectation, and pretence. Forced sympathies, unreal excitements, imaginary interests, hypocritical enthusiasms, fashionable likings and dislikings, contagious imitations, and a whole significant world of conventional conversation, which has not the meaning the language grammatically only would convey —these are the component parts of daily well-mannered intercourse. And how long will even the domestic virtues live and thrive in such a circumambient atmosphere? As to the name of God, a rude blow would hardly be a coarser surprise than it would be, amid the nicely-adjusted and smoothly-fitting insincerities of the system. What wonder that year after year this greedy, gnawing London, into whose den the young generations are thrown successively, should be eating the worth out of men and the very heart out of women?

But let us cast an eye at the action of simplicity in the

spiritual life. Simplicity lives always in a composed consciousness of its own demerit and unworthiness. It is possessed with a constant sense of what the soul is in the sight of God. It knows that we are worth no more than we are worth in His sight; and while it never takes its eye off that view of self, so it does not in any way seek to hide it from others. In fact it desires to be this, and no more than this, in the eyes of others; and it is pained when it is more. Every neighbour is as it were one of God's eyes, multiplying His presence; and simplicity acts as if every one saw us, knew us, and judged us, as God does; and it has no wounded feeling that it is so. Thus, almost without direct effort, the sphere of self-love is so narrowed that it has comparatively little room for action; although it never can be destroyed, nor its annoyance ever cease, except in the silence of the grave. The chains of human respect, which in the earlier stages of the spiritual life galled us so intolerably, now fall off from us, because simplicity has drawn us into the unclouded and unsetting light of the Eye of God. There is no longer any hypocrisy. There is no good opinion to lose, because we know we deserve none, and doubt if we possess it. We believe we are loved in spite of our faults, and respected because of the grace which is in us, and which is not our own and no praise to us. All diplomacy is gone; for there is no one to circumvent and nothing to appropriate. There is no odious laying ourselves out for edification; but an inevitable and scarcely conscious letting of our light shine before men, in such an obviously innocent and unintentional manner that it is on that account they glorify our Father who is in heaven. Who would dare to talk of God as laying Himself out to

display His own perfections in creation? Nay, He hides Himself; He has to be looked for and found out by all manner of deep thought, unexpected concealments, noiseless disclosures, and delightful surprises. The secrecy of the saints is akin to their simplicity. But this leads me almost at once to our next grace. So that I shall say no more now than that simplicity clothes us from head to foot in Christianlike gracefulness. It gives an unworldly air to all we do, an astonishing persuasiveness to all we say, and our very silence and inaction have something so celestial about them that they exorcise evil and convert souls.

5. There is still another flower of the twofold devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacred Infancy, the grace of the hidden life. We have already had to deplore the want of a recognition of God's presence in the world; and we have seen that the very things, on which we plume ourselves, only render that recognition fainter and more infrequent. Literature, philosophy, science, politics, and fashion, they are all striving to do without God, and are restless under the thought of Him, unless He will be to each of them the kind of God after the imaginings of their own hearts. Now the publicity of modern times has a great deal to do with this. The more we live before the world the less we live before God. The more the world's judgment is to us, the less is God's. The glare of the world's eye is angry and jealous, and it blinds us to the soft, pervasive, pleading look of the Eye of God. There is no more privacy now. We live in the streets and squares, as the old Athenians did, not for the laudable reason they had, that their homes were simple and unluxurious, and their sky serene and beautiful, but

because we are passionately enamoured of notoriety. All society seems to be a collection of self-erected bars, before which anybody and everybody is being called daily, for every sort of action, even for the details and scandals of domestic life. All mankind have agreed to confer jurisdiction upon themselves and upon each other to sit in judgment on their peers, and to open tribunals the very opposite of Christian confessionals. They do not see how public opinion can be kept pure, and public morals up to the mark of comfortable, and secure enjoyment of property and character without them. Associations, whether of a political, literary, or scientific character, or for mutual benefit and periodical banqueting, are developments of the same mania for publicity. Clubs are a social expression of it. The immense number of persons among whom the responsibility of government is infinitesimally shared, leads to the same result; and the increased facilities of rapid communication play into its hands; and the great tyrannical prophet of it all is the press, and the irresponsible despotic sway of anonymous journalism.

This great publicity is infectious, and gives rise to little publicities, and to a spirit of publicity; and here it is that the spiritual life touches upon it, and suffers from it. In spirituality talking is always a loss of power. It is like steam. It is mighty when it is imprisoned, a mere vapour when it is set free. The "secret of the king" is dishonoured when publicity is given to it, and it is no longer an element of earnestness, a source of fortitude within the soul. Better is it to follow the poet's advice:

"Prune thou thy words, the thoughts control
That o'er thee swell and throng;
They will condense within thy soul,
And change to purpose strong.
But he, who lets his feelings run
In soft luxurious flow,
Shrinks when hard service must be done,
And faints at every woe.
Faith's meanest deed more favour bears,
Where hearts and wills are weighed,
Than brightest transports, choicest prayers,
Which bloom their hour and fade."

Hence it is that so few people have a sufficiently strong spiritual constitution to be able to indulge unharmed in conversation about their interior life and their mystical experience. It almost always enervates them, and leads to distracted prayers, misty examinations of conscience, and broken resolutions.

So also is it in good works. Many fine plans have been spoiled prematurely by making them public. Not only because it was indiscreet, and has raised obstacles which would otherwise have been taken quietly and disarmed unawares.* But also because we get tired of a thing which we talk much about. Our firmness goes off in talk. Our courage too is disheartened because of the chilling and adverse criticism to which we have exposed ourselves. And thus partly because the charm of novelty is passed away, and partly because we shrink under criticism, and partly because we have forfeited God's

* Une bonne œuvre, divulguée avant le temps, est à moitié détruite. *S. Vincent de Paul.* Les affaires de Dieu se conservent dans le secret de son Esprit: les publier au monde, c'est les exposer au diable, qui peut les contrarier aisément, par ceux qui se laissent conduire à sa malignité. *Pere de Condren.*

special blessing by parading our good intention in the sunshine of the world's praise, we abandon our purpose, leaving it only just begun, or half done, or not begun at all, which is really the best fortune of all, because it is the least scandal. Our power to persevere went with our divulging the secret. In like manner charity is unqueened by all this publicity. Everything that is lovely and heavenly about it is marred and disfigured, the bloom gone from it, the odour passed off, because its sanctuary has been invaded. Neither is this the worst evil. Methods of sin and occasions of sin are multiplied by our knowing so much of each other, and by seeking so much to make ourselves known. The tongue is a fountain that requires a huge water-power to feed it, and this power publicity seems abundantly to furnish; so that with that class of sins, a desperate, hungry, multitudinous, insatiate brood, the facilities are almost converted into necessities. But we not only want to give ourselves publicity, but to know the publicity of others. Hence our minds are filled with such a host of little details, scandals, gossips, rumours, hints, surmises, interpretations, and judgments, that we are hardly able to practise the presence of God at all; and as to our prayers, distractions invade them with such irresistible regularity, that we can foresee and calculate the time when it will be no prayer at all, but all distraction; just as those loose sterile dunes of sand advance ruthlessly upon poor seaside villages, and will not grow a blade of grass, nor a willow sprout, whose roots might give some security by giving some consistence. What comes of this, but want of greatness? It is all so mean, so very mean. For the love of publicity, interpreted spiritually, comes to this.

The soul is so wearied of elevating itself to God, so tired of breathing the thin, pure air of His presence, that it turns faint and leans upon the world, and makes the world its judge, its remunerator, its God; and as the world lives on speed, feeds like a swallow as it flies, and cares for no harvest but swift results and the grandeurs of a night, everything becomes shallow about us, tall without girth, inconsistent, and insecure: everything must be run up, there is no time to grow. Novelties are wanted, and successes, and wonders, and sudden starts, and bold moves, and simultaneous, comprehensive achievements. And all these things are the contradictories of the spiritual life

It is a bad thing to be in the world's glare, and a hard thing to get out of it; and publicity, like the sun, takes the colour out of our dyes, but it cannot like the sun paint the flowers or mature the fruit. Still there are ways and means for such as will try them, and which have a certain aptitude to win a blessing upon them. I will venture upon five little rules. 1. Always keep some one thing concerning yourself hidden, some one good action, or some one grace, or some one virtuous quality which you think others would be likely to esteem. This one secret will be as good as a fortress to you. 2. Never communicate to others matters of spiritual direction, neither what you have mentioned to your spiritual guide, nor the advice which he has given you. By mentioning the first you lose true knowledge of yourself, for you exaggerate what you reveal, and by the second you lose the power of following the advice given. The extra mischief you do is a secondary consideration, though it is by no means small. 3. Leave some one branch of know

ledge an unknown country to you. It must be at once some department of knowledge which is not needful for the proper discharge of your duties, and at the same time is an object of curiosity and desire to you. You will not find a firmer footing in the soul, when you come to wrestle, than in this voluntary and self-denying ignorance. 4. Never keep a spiritual journal, a record of pious thoughts, or any vestige of a religious autobiography. I do not mean to say that saints have not done so. But you must not do it. You will live in a land of dreams and conceits if you do, and, though perhaps you do not believe it now, you will actually come at last to do and to say follies, in order to write them down afterwards. If you would know how the infatuation of keeping a journal is entangled with every root and fibre of self-love, throw your journal into the fire, and you will find out. Forget yourself, and what you have gone through. God remembers. Surely that is enough. If your visions and your extasies and your sweet thoughts of God are a boon the world could hardly do without, God will send you a spiritual director to command you under holy obedience to write them down. Wait till He does so. 5. Never remove a misunderstanding which has arisen about you, until you have quietly looked at it three separate times, in honour of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and are satisfied that it is really for God's glory that you should do so. In most cases God gets more glory out of the misunderstanding, than out of the removal of it. But the removal of it is always for our own glory. And these two thoughts put together should make us slow, cautious, and reluctant to come out again into the sunshine of men's good opinion,

when we have been so fortunate as to forfeit it without our fault.

These are at once the flowers and fruits of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacred Infancy: joy, adoration, gratitude, simplicity, and the grace of the hidden life. What more natural than that joy should come of the Sacred Infancy? The angels sang; it was good tidings of great gladness. They are, as the Church calls them, the joyful mysteries of the Rosary. And what is the special grace of the Blessed Sacrament but spiritual sweetness and eucharistic joy? In the Sacred Infancy we are called upon to adore at every turn. If Jesus sleeps, or smiles, or weeps, or wakes, if He be in the manger, or on Mary's lap, or in Joseph's arms, there is God always and in every mystery, the living God, to be worshipped and adored in all His numerous hiding places. And the Blessed Sacrament is the adorable God Himself beneath the veils. The lamp burns, the bell rings, the incense smokes, the knee bends, the head bows, the tongue is hushed. All these are signs and symbols; for the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is the adoration of the Uncreated Majesty. Adoration is of the essence of the devotion, not merely of its integrity. Every circumstance of the Sacred Infancy is in itself a distinct motive of gratitude. From the nature of the case it must be so. It is one of the first feelings which the Incarnation produces; and at our first view of Jesus it is naturally poured forth. There can be no need to show the connection between gratitude and the Blessed Sacrament; for is not the Eucharist itself by its very name rightfully proclaimed the Sacrament of Thanksgiving? Simplicity is the presiding unity of the Sacred Infancy. If to be holy we are to be-

come as little children, to be saints we must be as the little Child of Bethlehem. And simplicity is equally the great law of the Blessed Sacrament. It is not something consecrated by the virtue of God, it is God Himself. It is not the influence, the effect, the grace of Jesus: it is Jesus Himself, the personal fount of grace: and therefore it confers grace in a different manner, or at least by a different title from the other sacraments. Indeed, if the casualty of grace in the sacraments be moral and not physical, as is by some considered more probable, then is it probable* that not the Body of our Lord only, but the species also, confer grace, a doctrine which adds to the simplicity of its operation, and is very wonderful beside. To speak of Bethlehem and Nazareth, of the Host and the Tabernacle, what is it but to speak of the hidden life? Before our Lord came, the world knew nothing of it. It is one of the new ideas which the Incarnation has deposed in the bosom of humanity. It is one of the salient characteristics of the final revelation of God to man. It is a doctrine, a practice, a devotion, which is Catholic all over. It seems to pass away with orthodoxy, as if it were of that very quintessence of the Gospel, which escapes and is breathed away where the unity of the Church has been broken by ever so slight a rent.

Such is the comparison between the devotions to the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacred Infancy, suggested by the practice of the Church, and disclosed by our Lord Himself in His secret communications with His saints. The devotions are almost identical in spirit. Their mysteries are so remarkably similar as to suggest that the one

* De Lugo, de Euch. i. ii. 22–23

was a type and adumbration of the other, if anything so real can be called a shadow. The devotional phenomena of the Blessed Sacrament are quite as beautiful as those of the Sacred Infancy, and tend towards the same results in the spiritual life. But here a great and double contrast arises between the two. The devotion to the Sacred Infancy is strictly commemorative. It is love and worship dwelling on the past. The mysteries of Bethlehem and Nazareth were once living and in action. Now they live in faith only. The world saw them, heard them, touched them, felt them. Now they are poetry, history, doctrine, and devotion. Thus our worship as it were goes through them and seeks Jesus beyond them, and rests in Him far away. But devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is the worship of the living presence of Jesus. It implies an act daily renewed, a mystery in constant and real action, and here with us and amongst us, before our own eyes and by our own voices. Its mysteries are alive and present and in vivid operation. Its operations are contemporary with our own. It is the true reality of our dear Lord's Sacred Humanity, not a mere memorial of some beautiful thing which He did above a thousand years ago. This of course gives a depth and solemnity, an earnestness and a truth, to this devotion, with which none other can compare. Then, secondly, if we put out of view the merely memorial character of devotion to the Sacred Infancy, and suppose it to be in the course of being enacted really and truly before our eyes, we may contrast in themselves the mysteries of Bethlehem with the mysteries of the Altar; and we may venture with all reverence to say, that the wisdom and the power and the condescension of God have outdone upon the Altar what they

did at Bethlehem. The operations are even yet more subtle and more wonderful, more hidden and more heavenly. Nay, the fact that such another depth of goodness, such a new vista of miraculous compassions, losing themselves in infinity and darkness, should be disclosed, after the stupendous abyss of the Incarnation had opened up and given forth its creations of beauty, its portents of power, its revelations of love, its manifold sacramental forms of divine grace, surely this in itself was a new wonder, as the Incarnation itself was a wonder upon creation. It is not with God as with His people. The glory of the second temple was greater than the glory of the first, and the glory of the third united and excelled the glories of the other two.

Let us, then, betake ourselves with new fervour to this queen of sacraments, and renew our faith that we may become like the Child of Bethlehem. As De Lugo says, it may be piously believed, though it cannot be proved, that, equal dispositions being supposed, the Eucharist, simply as a sacrament and in its sacramental action, may confer upon us such grace in quantity and quality as is unknown to the other sacraments.* It is a pious belief, though the truth can be known to God only. But the chief thing is that our Lord is there, and therein consists the indubitable pre-eminence of this glorious Sacrament. Let us not be afraid of the venturesome questions of deep theology. Remember, the leader of them, St. Thomas, is a saint, of whom our Lord Himself said that he had written well of Him. The Church is by our side. No questions are idle. Scholastic wisdom is never wholly

* De Lugo, I. i. xi.

subtle. Holiness and fear and unworldliness and love will all grow in our hearts while we lift the veil and gaze, as far as He lets us, through the medium of pure and saintly minds, on this mysterious operation in the Venerable Eucharist.

Blessed are they who through the singleness of a pure intention, through the keenness of their faith, and through the ardour of their love, even on earth copy the Eternal One, work with Him, work for Him, work in Him, follow His fashions and bide His time. One day by a stretch of compassion we shall lie in the Bosom of the Eternal, and gaze upon the sweet Vision of Him; and far beneath that harbour of our peace there will be no more the cities of earth, ringing with the strong voice of labour. The world will have passed away; and as when some mighty tree falls in a forest, there is a rustling of the tossing leaves and then a thundering crash, and a little silence, and the green boughs meet and wave again over the place of the giant that has fallen, and the fearless song of some little bird fills the summer air — so will the world have sped away, and the ceaseless songs of seraphs will be heard, clear and soft and beautiful, as though there had never been a fallen world, clear and soft and beautiful as on creation's dawn, and in the selfsame strains, most wonderful, most sweet, Sanctus! Sanctus! Sanctus! Dominus Deus Sabaoth

BOOK III.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT A PICTURE OF GOD

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SECTION I.

THE TRINITY IN UNITY.

THE problem of the world often weighs heavy on our spirits, and for different reasons at different times. One while it is that life is weary and difficult. All about it seems long and tiresome, as if it never would end, and we could never hold on till the last. The pressure of duties, instead of being lightened by habit, is aggravated by continuance, while the powers of endurance are worn out or weakened. The result of it all is disgust with our daily duties, want of devotion in our spiritual exercises, and the loss of sweetness and obligingness in our intercourse with each other. Another while our trial is that life is dark and without prospects. Just as a summer day sometimes closes in, and the sky is obscured by a coating of grey clouds, which have grown together without warning, and form a silent, motionless, impenetrable mass; so is our sky overcast and oppressive. Everything looks wrong. We cannot work because we are languid;

and we cannot rest because we are anxious and irritable. We do not know where to find fault, though we know that fault there is, and that it is in ourselves.

Another time when we have been quietly occupying our minds with devotional things, and living in a tranquil course of prayer, thoughts of another order begin to drift upon us, and at last gather in such numbers and with such force as to master and possess our minds. They are not exactly temptations against the faith, but they are akin to them. The Church seems to lose in our own minds the dignity it possessed. We are inclined to criticise. Things which lately impressed us now make us peevish. The world's side of the question grows upon us. We do not quite see, though it was so extremely clear but a while ago, how modern movements of polity, civilization, and science, fit in with the position and actual operations of the Church. We do not think theologians do the world justice; and the conversation of pious men on the subject sounds to us flippant, self-sufficient, and wanting both in a wide knowledge of facts and a larger temper to weigh them and to appreciate them: while Catholic writers appear to fall short of the intellectual standard of their adversaries. Then there are great vexatious questions which rise up suddenly in our minds, often considered before, and which we imagined we had dealt with and laid to rest satisfactorily; but now they swell to prodigious dimensions, and seem imperiously to require answers, and we cast about in vain for such as shall satisfy us in our present mood. It dawns upon us that the world is very good, and the people of the world very good, and yet that all this goodness is mostly without grace. Or on the other hand it comes to us

that the world is enormously evil, and the very enormity of it makes us terrified to give the Christian answers to the questions which straightway arise: and so we come to look quietly on heresy and schism, as if there might easily be evils more terrific than those. Besides this, the world is so loud and positive on its own side; and in spite of ourselves this positive decided air and tone carries us along with it. We begin to give the world a more respectful hearing, because we think we have done it an injustice heretofore. If in this crisis we happen to fall in with good people who have never been so disturbed, and who treat these difficulties lightly, and meet them with some common-place solutions, or who regard them merely as symptoms of moral disease, woe be unto us; for we grow angry with truth when it is represented to us as these good people represent it, as at once superficial and unjust, arbitrary and yet shallow. How shall a man who does not see a difficulty be able to answer it, simply because another puts it before him?

Then our difficulties change. We seem to lose our equilibrium. We have reckoned upon grace and ourselves for certain duties, and have in consequence involved ourselves in certain responsibilities; and we are out in our reckonings. Either we have mistaken ourselves, or we have not calculated our own defects sufficiently, and their bearing on our work; or old habits have lost their power and died out, or for some hidden reason grace lies inoperative in us. What is the matter? Are we passing into a different spiritual condition? Are we going to cease to be religious men at all? Are time, and life, and the necessity of persevering, about to treat us as we read of their treating others, and to be too much

for us? We are in the position of astronomers who have drawn up tables to go by, and are all thrown out because they have omitted to allow for certain inequalities, and surrender themselves to an ill-humoured despair because they have not vigour enough to sit down and make their calculations over again.

It does not remove the difficulties to say that all these are temptations, as they really are. To give them their true name does not remove their difficulty. They are part of the restlessness and impatience of the imperfections of our understanding, as well as of the vanity, self-love, and morbid sensitiveness of our moral nature. Besides which they are effects which we might have reckoned on beforehand from the power of the world and the bright light of its empire, its wisdom, and its civilization. It would be contrary to all laws if we could move in our orbits without any eccentricities, in the presence of so monstrous and so attractive a mass as the world and the world's belongings form. Nay, the more we observe what is going on around us, the more we strive to keep pace with a state of things which it is our duty to impress, and which we never can impress while we are behind it; in a word, the more thoughtful we are, the more at times must the disturbance of this mass be upon us. Long thought will set it right, if with long thought we join humble prayer, and a cheerful promptitude in our relations with others. The keen suffering, sometimes the intolerable anguish, of these trials are necessary, both for our own good, and for the power of doing good to others. That they are, not universally, but generally, accompanied by faults on our side is clear. But we must be careful not to exaggerate this. On the whole it does not appear

the wisest course either wholly to entertain such temptations or wholly to repulse them. Both the efforts are bad, and do the temptations in question too much honour. Diversion and distraction seem to be at once the most reasonable, the most easy, and in the end the most successful methods of recovering our lost peace and working back into the old sunshine again.

Of these distractions none is more powerful or tranquillizing than devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Many a time when a man is wild with the questions, the doubts, the despairs, the uncertainties, the fears, with which a view of life has surrounded him, and which are barking and baying at him, like so many dogs, he goes by an instinct of grace to the Blessed Sacrament, and in a moment, without effort on his part, all these shrill voices are silent. His Lord is with him, the waves are still, the storm is abated, and, not after further voyage but straightway, he is at the haven where he would be. One look at the face of Jesus, and the clouds fall away, and there is light. The light of the tabernacle illuminates the Church, and the illumination deepens the darkness of all that is outside. Not flesh and blood, but the Eternal Father has revealed to us His Divinity, as He did to Peter of old, and though in ourselves we are ready through weakness to deny Him, yet by His grace we are ready to die for Him. No one comes to Jesus, except the Father draw Him, and then Jesus shows us the Father, and it suffices us. Thus the Blessed Sacrament is everything to us. We have our dearest Lord with us, what care we for aught else? Darkness is only pleasant shade, when He is nigh. Disquietudes are worth their pains, for the extreme sweetness of having His gentle hand to smooth

them down. Difficulties were desirable to go through, if it were only to see Him come forth, the sun of truth, and illuminate all things with so sudden and so radiant a beauty. And the repose of it all is so wonderful! For it is there, at the door of the tabernacle, that we find our true place in creation, that our pride is tamed while our wounds are being dressed and healed, and our restlessness is made ashamed while it is rebuked by that voiceless love. What we guessed at and doubted heretofore, now we feel, we touch, we taste, we know. Our own littleness, the world's grandeur and its mischief, the glory and the justice of God, the manifold meanings of Jesus, and the joy of being in His Church, all lie before us in their proper places and in their true proportions, clear, beautiful, and harmonious. In a word, to have God so given up to us, to be with us and to be ours, as He is in the Blessed Sacrament, is our all in all.

But there is another thing to be observed. Not only is the Blessed Sacrament a sure, and not unfrequently an instantaneous, remedy for all those mental perplexities which are so intimately connected with moral culpability in ourselves; but somehow or other almost all the difficulties in life are attracted towards the Blessed Sacrament and explained by it. Difficulties in science, in morals, in theology, in history, in the Church, in God, all seem to come and group themselves around the Blessed Sacrament, as though it were to sun themselves and place themselves in the warm, invigorating light. Thus nearly all the problems, which tease and vex us in these days, are more or less solved, or shown to be solvable, by the Blessed Sacrament. This is an ominous beginning; for it sounds like the opening of a controversial discussion.

But it will not really be so, as you will see presently. Devotion is my object, not controversy: and I shall show this in the outset by quietly taking for granted as true, and without proof, the whole of the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist, as taught by the Council of Trent. My object in this third Book is as follows. To know God and to understand His ways is the great end of life, and to walk in His presence is all sanctity. Now God is the great difficulty of the present day. Where He is, how much He does, how much He claims, why He does it and by what right He claims it, what claims, if any, He allows to other things, all these are questions which form intellectual difficulties, in physical science, in politics, in metaphysics, in law, in theology, in all the relations between the Church and the world: and on all these difficulties an extraordinary bright and soft light is thrown by the phenomena of the Blessed Sacrament. But the seeking after God and finding Him is not only, or principally, an intellectual satisfaction. It is also, and much more, an act of devotion, of worship, of delight, of love. It is an enjoyment of God, and as such a foretaste of heaven. Hence the prosecution of such a search is eminently devotional; and it is in that spirit that I invite you to undertake it. You are weary of controversy. No wonder. God be praised! Controversy is indeed a cross, a penance, an austerity, worse than fasting, watching, or the harassing hair-shirt. But if I were writing for controversial end, I should begin by *proving* the Catholic doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament, instead of which I begin by *assuming* it: and, assuming it, I wish to show you that it is the exemplar and the type of all God's operations, the model of all the ways in which the Creator

vouchsafes to be, to work, to hide Himself, and to manifest Himself, in His own Creation.

There is nothing in life one-half so sweet as to think of God. The hand feels after Him in the dark, grasps a thousand things and relinquishes them instantly, for they are not what it seeks: they are not God. The eye wanders over the multitude of objects restless and dissatisfied; but when it lights on God, it has found its peace and the vision of its joy. God is the home both of the mind and heart; and when His will has, of a truth, in act as well as in desire, become the home of the will, then it is heaven already. But in seeking after God we must bear this reverently in mind, that we can never tell how He would condescend to act in any particular case, except by knowing how He has actually deigned to behave in other particular cases, clearly ascertained either by knowledge or by faith. We know God only by what He has done to His own creation, or by what He has told to His own creation; for it is only in these two ways that we know anything of His Divine Perfections. What I mean is this, that from our knowledge, which through revelation is immense, of God's Perfections and His Life in Himself, that is, His Trinity in Unity, we cannot proceed to a calculation of how He would act externally to Himself, though we might know in some measure how He would not act. We can only know how He would act from the ways in which He has been pleased to act already. We have no faculties which could lead us to infer beforehand the act of creation from the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. We cannot conjecture that God being what He is must act in such or such a way. It would be infinitely unsafe, and hardly

reverent, to make such conjectures. None of God's operations outside Himself are necessary. All His operations within Himself are necessary. The Eternal Generation of the Son is necessary. The Eternal Procession of the Holy Ghost is necessary. But everything outside Himself is free. Thus we could not say that because God is the Perfect Being we know Him to be, therefore it was necessary there should be a creation to manifest those perfections. Neither will ye say, as Malebranche seems to say in his system of optimism, that if God created at all He was bound to create in the best possible way; for to God there can be no such thing as a best possible way.* Nevertheless it is perfectly true to say that all God's external operations represent eternal ideas in the Divine Mind; and consequently that an observation of them increases our knowledge of God: and it is true, further, that whatever increases our knowledge of God increases our love of Him.

It is plain therefore that, although we cannot argue from God to the works of God, but only from His works to His works, or from His works to Himself, it is nevertheless of great importance before we proceed to an examination of His works that we should have such an idea as He has been pleased Himself to give us of what He is in Himself, of His life, His glory, His perfections. We shall thus get better hold of our subject, and also start with such profound reverence in our minds, that when we shall come to use more common language about Him, it shall not be coupled with common associations. I must try then to give you a sketch of the Catholic doc-

* See Book IV.

trine of the Most Holy Trinity. God is and lives and reigns independently of us. He was when we were not. He needed us not. We contribute nothing to Him, but what is purely accidental. But we are because He is; and we are what we are because He is what He is. Hence the interest to us of knowing what God is like in Himself.

Alas! how hard it is to tell even what the Church has told to us. In truth the mystery of the Holy Trinity should be spoken of with tears rather than with words. We believe, yet we cannot describe. We adore, yet we can never comprehend. Multiply our understandings beyond all human calculations, and our affections beyond all that we can imagine of angelic love, and changed as we should be, the great mystery still remains as far from being comprehended as ever. Nay, it is just all this which makes the Most Holy Trinity a mystery of such indescribable tenderness. At once and in the face of this august mystery we are children, happy, hushed, and awe-stricken. The very Church amazes us by the child-like character of her offices on the feast of this mystery, by her constant, simple cry all day long of O Beata Trinitas! O Beata Trinitas!

Of all mysteries it is the most ancient. In approaching it there is no such thing as antiquity: antiquity is novelty, where it is concerned. We mount up, not only through the history of the Church and the fortunes of the synagogue, not only through the times of the patriarchs and the long lives of the antediluvian fathers, not only through the creation of man, but also through the countless cycles of organic matter and irrational life, and beyond that, of inorganic matter, for how many millions

of secular ages who shall tell? We pass beyond the grand creation of intellectual light in the various kingdoms of the angels, and rise to the silence that was before creation, when God was and only God, and God infinite in glory and in joy, and in the plenitude of His own self-sufficient and mysterious life: and then we are only come to the threshold of a whole eternity, of an eternity, unbeginning, unflowing, unmaturing, unrevolving, an effect without a cause, while it is at the same time the cause of causes, a life and an interior fount of life, immovable, bodiless, and passionless, not a time or a place or a motion or a sound, but a simple act, one Nature and more than one Person, distinct yet one, equal and undivided, sharing alike in one eternity and in one essence, in order but without subordination, in procession but without precedence, Three Persons, Two Persons breathing, yet One Principle, and, together with the Person breathed forth, One substance, One Nature, One only God! These are words, but they represent eternity.

But the Holy Trinity is not only the most ancient, it is also the queen of all mysteries. It is enthroned over all. It rules and presides over the destinies of all. It embraces all within itself. It gives out all from itself. It lends to all their beauty, their force, their fitness, and their divinity. It is full of depths, of mysteries that we know and mysteries that to us are unknown. Especially does it contain twice three abysses of external operations, into which angels and men desire to look, and yet turn giddy as they gaze, as much because they are sweetly inebriated with the excesses of divine goodness, as because their understanding swims and at last gives way to extasy

in the glories of the divine power. These six abysses are Predestination, Creation, Incarnation, Justification, Transubstantiation, and Glorification. These, with the mother-mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, form the various sciences which compose that prime glory of the human mind, the marvellous edifice of Catholic theology.

Yet the Holy Trinity is not only the most ancient and most queenly, it is also the last of all mysteries. The mysterious decrees of the Divine Predestination will obtain their accomplishment with a fulness and perfection which infinite love could alone confer upon them. Different creations may possibly be worked out, leaving their results with God, and new creations follow in their room. For anything we know, Creation may pass on from orb to orb through millions of worlds, as the Divine Fingers may choose to press the bright keys of His stupendous instrument. The world whereon the Word was incarnate may be the spiritual centre of unnumbered systems of worlds. The Incarnation will have gathered its glorified family round about its Head. Justification will have become a reminiscence of terrestrial history; and Glorification simply an inadequate expression of a present life. Transubstantiation will be a miracle no longer wrought,* or we at least shall be beholding Jesus in His proper heavenly species. But when all mysteries have come to some sort of an end, are resting in some centres, and are satisfied in some adequate fulfilments, there will still remain the broad, the untraversed and untraversable mystery of the Holy Trinity, and we our-

* See Book IV. for some account of the opposite opinion, which holds that the Blessed Sacrament will be reserved in heaven.

selves shall be in rapture in its lap through all eternity. Surely then the Holy Trinity is the sum and substance of human knowledge, the mark of human hopes, the single object of human adoration, and the sole sufficient joy of human love.

Let us come nearer: let us look over the brink. By what figure shall we present the vision that lies before us? Shall we call it a boundless ocean, with the intolerably glancing radiance of the sun upon the unity of its manifold waters? No! for then we should fail of expressing its most attractive feature, its unutterable tranquillity. Even the beautiful sea tires the eye at last; for on the changeful shore we soon come to long for the repose of the wood, the mountain, and the lake. Shall we compare it to a city on the steeps by the water side lighted up from within, and reflecting its countless lights on the depths below? Here we should miss its unity. A mountain range would not give the sweetness of its outspread radiance, nor a region of glorious forest the amazing variety of its fertile power. No! we can liken God only to God Himself. But let us look over the brink: let us ask the Church to name for us some of the magnificent details which we behold. Again twice three abysses lie before us, which lips, that the coal of the seraphim has not touched, may not do more than indicate. All of them are inexhaustible objects of joyous extatic contemplation; and at this moment, many that we love, whose day, O happy they! is done, are gazing with the delights of beatific awe into those very depths, now in thrilling silence, now in loud raptures of unearthly song.

The First Abyss is the Unity in Trinity, the Unity of

Essence, and the Trinity of Persons. This is the distinctive peculiarity of the Christian object of faith, which neither human reason nor angelical intelligence could have ever reached. The Unity is three-fold, a Unity of Essence, and again of Majesty, and again of Simplicity. Yet in this triple Unity, the utterest unity conceivable, the Three Persons are distinct. They have their own properties, and they stand in different relations to Each Other; and yet They are but one God: and, as theology even to human reason can indicate, God would not be God if in the Godhead there were more than Three Persons, or less then Three.*

The Second Abyss holds the Relations of the Three Divine Persons to each other. In theological language a Personal Relation joined to the Essence makes a Person. Thus, there is the relation of Paternity, which constitutes the Person of the Unbegotten Father, the relation of Filiation, which constitutes the Person of the Eternally Begotten Son, and the relation of Passive Spiration which constitutes the Person of the Eternally Proceeding Spirit; while the fourth relation of Active Spiration differs from the other three and does not constitute a Person, as belonging already to Two Persons, but reflects back from the Holy Spirit, the Limit of the Godhead, to His One Principle of Two Persons, the Father and the Son; and thus is made up the Trinity of Persons by these Four Relations, and each of the Three Persons is as it were the centre and the terminus of the Others.

The Third Abyss contains the Particularities of Each of the Three Divine Persons. These flow in mysterious

* St. Thomas, P. i. q. xxx. art. ii.

ways from their Relations; and it would require a treatise to speak of them at any length. In the Father we perceive His Innascibility, and His Fountain-Head of Divinity, as two virgin yet prolific wells, giving forth immeasurable grandeurs, and wonders without name; and yet most wonderful of all, pre-eminence is not among them. In the Son His Equality of the Father, and Image of Him, are the ever-flowing fountains of His own magnificence, and of all that vast variety of worshipful perfection which the Church understands by that one thrilling name she gives Him, disclosed it may be by Mary to the Evangelist,—the Word! In the Holy Spirit we behold the Link of the Father and the Son, the Limit of the Godhead, the Jubilee of the Father and the Son, nearest to Creation as human words count nearness, and out of these three Particularities, as out of copious salutary deeps, we draw evermore fresh motives for a peculiar love for this Third Divine Person.*

The Fourth Abyss holds and hides the perfect Equality of the Three. Where shall we look for equality, and

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* Of the difference between the Generation of the Son and the Procession of the Holy Ghost, Bossuet has grandly said: Taissez vous, raisonnements humains: Dieu a voulu expliquer que la procession de son Verbe étoit une veritable et parfaite génération: ce que c'étoit que la procession de son Saint-Esprit, il n'a pas voulu le dire, ni qu'il y eût rien dans la nature qui representât une action si substantielle, et tout ensemble si singulière. C'est un secret réservé à la vision bienheureuse. (Elévations sur les Mystères, ii. Semaine, 5.) St. Augustin says, Distinguere inter illam Generationem et hanc Processionem, nescio, non valeo, non sufficio. Contra Maxim. lib. 3. cap. 13. and again, De Trinitat. lib. 15. cap. 27. Difficillimum est Generationem a Processione distinguere. See the question also discussed in Gonzalez, De Trinitat. cap. ii. De Processionibus, Discuss. iii.

not find it here? Can lines and numbers, measures and proportions, likenesses and differences, by any processes known in human science, exhibit equalities which shall be more than faithless shadows of the unblemished equality of the Holy Trinity? If we look at the perfection of the Substance, it is absolutely identical in All the Three. If we regard the grandeur of Their Attributes, it is unspeakably equal in All the Three. Their Relations do not disturb it; nor do Their Particularities, by change or compensation, re-distribute it. The title to the prostrate homage and adoration of Their creatures is even and equal and co-eternal in the Three. Thus, while there is no distinctness so complete as the distinction of the Three Persons, no Relations more solid, no Particularities more decided, nevertheless this adorable beauty and variety of the Distinct Persons leaves unruffled their inexpresssible equality. The equality expresses for Each of the Three what the Unity expresses for all. And "who is sufficient for these things?"

The Fifth Abyss is their Mutual Life in each other, their Perichoresis or Circuminsession, as it is called in the Fathers and in the Schools. This is the Interior Life of the Godhead, as if Each Person dwelt in Each and sat in the lap of Each. It is with each of the Three Divine Persons an intimate, total, and mutual residence of all Their one Substance in Each Other, together with an incessant thought and delighted contemplation of Each Other. We can do no more than expand the words which the Church has given us. It is easy and joyous to hang over the marge of this abyss in prayer, while the heart is being nurtured with love out of its mystic deeps. Yet there is nothing out of which we can hew conceptions,

or which we can shape into definite thoughts, or utter in intelligible words. All that we can see to express in that abyss are seven operations of eternal and infinite love in exquisite combinations. There is first the Father's love of the Son, and secondly the Father's love of the Holy Ghost, and thirdly the Son's love of the Father, and fourthly the Son's love of the Holy Ghost, and fifthly the Holy Ghost's love of the Father, and sixthly the Holy Ghost's love of the Son, and seventhly the love of the Father and the Son producing the Holy Ghost, who yet, though produced, is co-eternal with Them Both. Now if we think of created love, angelic love and human love and think that all such love, and all the possible love producible from ten million worlds ten million times more perfect than this, and more populous and more long-lived, with Mary multiplied ten million times, could not amount to more than the feeblest approximation to a figure of one of these seven loves: if we think of the various kinds of love, paternal, filial, fraternal, conjugal, and the combinations of which they are capable, if we add omnipotence to their bewildering human intensity, and imperturbable calm to this omnipotence, and then add together all this seven-fold,—we may get some such distant idea, as befits our darkness and nothingness, of the profound jubilee of the Interior Life of God.

The Sixth Abyss embraces the Mission of the Divine Persons, and brings us to the edge of the gracious external operations of the Most Holy Trinity. God does not stop in Himself. This is the mystery of Creation. Mission is like the Exterior Life of God; and it is not only the communication of His love, the imparting of His perfections, so far as they can be imparted to crea-

tures, but the doing of this by the Mission of a Divine Person. And the Mission of the Divine Persons is a different thing from Their mere omnipotence or goodness. We shall gain a clearer idea of Mission if we contrast it with Creation; for though the Missions of the Divine Persons are efficacious works; yet Their efficacious works are not necessarily Missions. It must therefore be distinguished from Creation. De Lugo says with consummate subtilty that the relation of the Creator with His creatures is of such a kind, subsisting so really and decisively in the creatures themselves, that if by impossible supposition there were two Gods, one in One Person, and One in Three, and both had creations depending upon them, the creatures of the Triune God would be intrinsically different from the creatures of God in one sole Person, and that the difference, whatever it was, would have reference precisely to the fact of His being a Triune God.* Mission must not be confounded with any such impress of creative power and love. Mission implies creation as already existing. There must be creatures to whom the Divine Persons may be sent and given. Mission implies the Eternal

* De Lugo De Mysterio Incarn. Disp. XX. sect. iii. n. 47, discussing the question whether Christ could see the mystery of the Holy Trinity in the Hypostatic Union as in a medium, says, In casu illo impossibili, si essent duo Dii, alter trinus, alter non trinus in personis, tunc creatura pendens a Deotrino, haberet in se ordinem intrinsecum ad illum Deum ut talem, et qui comprehenderet illam, cognosceret illam differre ab alia creatura pendente a Deo non trino, quia nimirum diceret ordinem ad talem Deum. Conf. also Suarez, De Incarn. xxvii. 5. See also Ripalda, de Ente Supernaturali; and also Francis de Lugo, the Cardinal's brother, de Charactere Sacramentali, under De Ente Supernaturali, in his Commentary on the first part of St. Thomas.

Procession of the Persons sent; yet, as St. Thomas says, the Procession does not constitute the Mission, which is temporal and not eternal. According to the angelical doctor, the invisible Mission of the Second and Third Persons, together with the indwelling of the First, has been from the creation of the world, and was simultaneous with creation; because creation was effected in a state of grace, and invisible Mission has no other end than sanctifying grace, which is "at once both given and sent;" and all who are in a state of grace enjoy the Mission of the Divine Persons. Moreover, wherever there is the invisible Mission of the Holy Ghost, there also is the invisible Mission of the Son; and while the Mission of the One differs from the Mission of the Other, in that Their origin is different, it being in one case the Generation and in the other the Procession, nevertheless the two Missions are common in the production of grace in the soul, though from our point of view the Mission of the Son is eminently to the understanding, while the Mission of the Holy Ghost is eminently to the will. Thus as in the Most Holy Trinity the Father is always the fountain of the Godhead, the Son always being begotten, and the Spirit always proceeding, so in our souls as we grow in grace, day by day, the Holy Ghost is ever being sent to us by the Father and the Son, and the Son is also ever being sent to us by the Father, and the Father unsent is ever dwelling in us; so that, when we are in a state of grace, we are a mysterious image of the Divine Processes, and a living temple of the Holy Trinity with the three great powers of our soul, will, understanding, and memory, appropriated, according to human conceptions, to the three ever-blessed

Persons.* Yet though Mission is different from creation, and is a further condescension, it equally with creation falls under the theological axiom, that whatever God operates outside Himself is an operation of the whole Trinity.† There are two kinds of Mission, visible and invisible, both full of various interest and holy speculation. Visible Mission is manifested by some outward sign disclosing the advent or presence of the Person sent, as the Incarnation manifests the Mission of the Word, and the tongues of fire the Mission of the Holy Ghost. Invisible Mission is accompanied by some spiritual and invisible effect in the soul, as is the case in the justification of a sinner. Theologians say that in visible Mission one Person may be sent and manifested without Another, whereas in all invisible Mission both the Persons proceeding are sent, and although the Father is not sent, He gives Himself to the soul with the Others. In a word, in invisible Mission, the Divine Persons are so substantially present to the soul, that if, by impossibility They were not present to it by Their immensity, They would be so by reason of the gift of sanctifying grace. It is difficult to put into words the sublime and gracious intimacy with God which this mystery implies. Each Mis-

* S. Thomas, Summ. Pare, i. q. 43. See especially Article VIII. where St. Thomas explains and harmonizes the apparently varying language of the Fathers about the Persons *sending*. The opinion expressed in the text is the one which S. Thomas himself prefers.

† Thus, in Mystical Theology, the action of the Divine Persons is recognised in conjunction with the axiom in the text. Licet, says Harphius, opera Sanctæ Trinitatis sint indiscreta, tamen unicuique Personæ in divinis appropriatur actio sua propria in tribus superioribus viribus animæ. *Theol. Myst. (corrected edition,) lib.* ii. *p.* iv *cap.* 63.

sion is thus a real gift of the Person sent, not a simple communication of grace or outpouring of spiritual gifts: and as the Father sends the Son, and the Father and the Son send the Holy Ghost, and the Father Himself remains unsent, the Divine Missions are exactly a reflection of the Generation and Procession within the Holy Trinity, together with the adorable Innascibility of the Father. Theologians also distinguish the ends of Mission as being also threefold. The Divine Persons are given to us by Mission, first as a principle of meritorious action, otherwise impossible, secondly as an object of knowledge and love, and thirdly as the Sovereign Good;* and it is the consummation of our joy in the Beatific Vision that there the Unsent Father gives to us Himself in such a manner as He has not given Himself before. We have the Father and then, as the apostle St. Philip says, it suffices us.†

Such, in the fixed language of the Church, is the doctrine of the Most Holy Trinity. I have drawn from it no conclusions; neither have I enlarged on the portions of it which are capable of, and have actually received, most holy and beautiful commentary from different schools

* Or as Billuart somewhat differently expresses it: 1. in prima hominis justificatione; 2. in quolibet augmento gratiæ; 3. in beatitudine in qua Deus novo et speciali modo, erit in anima per unionem suæ essentiæ in ratione speciei intelligibilis. De Trin. iv.

† In the hope of producing in the minds of some of my theological readers the same feelings of devotional delight which they cause in my own, towards the Person of the Eternal Father, I subjoin the words of St. Cyril of Jerusalem about the Paternity: πρὸς πάντων τῶν αἰώνων τὸ πατρικὸν ἀξίωμα ἔχει ὁ πατήρ, τόυτῳ μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς λοιποῖς ἀξιώμασι σεμνούμενος. *Catech.* viii. If it is, in any sense, more to the Eternal Father to be Father than to be God, how much follows from this, in ascetical and mythical theology, for us who are members of His Son!

of approved theological opinion. I have contented myself with putting before you, in its huge dimensions, this royal dogma of the faith: more would have led me away, perhaps from its fascinating interest far away, from my present subject.

Such is the ever-blessed Object of our faith. Let us now endeavour to picture to ourselves the circumstances by which His gracious manifestation of Himself in heaven is surrounded. There is the sacred Humanity of Jesus, there also is our Blessed Lady, with the spirits of the angels and the souls of the saints. There are around Him the flower of the generations of men, an innumerable multitude, St. John calls it, of redeemed souls. Each saint is, as it were, a separate world, a distinct theatre of God's creative love, a very kingdom by himself of the most various and astonishing operations of grace. When we are most struck with the lives of the saints, not one-half, as the queen of the south said of Solomon's magnificence, has been told us. We see but the outside of the wonders, and yet that fills us with holy admiration, and sometimes almost tries our faith. Now heaven is filled with multitudes of these, and in a far higher state of purity and beauty than they ever possessed on earth. The incomparable graces of the Apostles, the bravery of the martyrs, the beautifully varied patience of the confessors, the magnificent intellect of the doctors, and the white brightness of the virgins, in a word, all the royalty of earth is gathered there; and what is its attitude before the Holy Trinity? One of the most utter abasement. These souls feel themselves less than nothing; the most surpassing graces are as impurity before the radiance of that immense majesty; the loftiest faculties of the human

understanding are as the feeble ignorance of a beast by the side of that unfathomable wisdom. There is no sense of power, no victory of discovery, no joy of sufficiency, no clearness of perfect comprehension, in all that glorious multitude. Their understandings are grown beyond human dimensions, their affections sublimed into something we should beforehand have conceived unattainable, their men's minds are more like angels' spirits, and their glad souls are annealed in the fires of that strong Vision so that they shall never break to all eternity. Yet they tremble with joyous fear. Abjection, abasement, prostration, self-annihilation, these are the words by which we should at once describe their worship and their happiness, not their worship only, but their happiness as well.

It would be long to recount all the marvels which theology teaches us of the holy angels, of the might of their power, the breadth of their intelligence, and the fervour of their love. They are our elder brothers, the earlier family of God. The various kingdoms of their hierarchies lie before us, in species inconceivably diversified. Their graces, their powers, their gifts, their operations, their work, all are different, the one class from the other. By them they are distinguished into hierarchies, and those again into choirs, and the choirs into species; and by them also they are grouped together in congenial multitudes of similar beauty, power, and office. From what theology can tell us, it is plain that, if we could know it, the perfections of the angels would form a far vaster, more various, and more beautiful science than the natural history of the various kingdoms of this material world. Probably it would disclose to us many Divine Perfections of which we now do not suspect the existence, because

we neither know the names of these perfections nor can conceive the ideas of them. So far surpassing mortal glory are these wonderful creatures, as we may conceive that early angelic creation would surpass this later and indeed modern creation of man. Daniel, the prophet, hardened, as it were, to visions from their number and their brilliance, and St. John, whose eagle eye was learning to see clear amid the dazzling splendours of the Apocalypse, both alike when they beheld an angel, fell down and worshipped him, as if the light of God had suddenly broken out before them and had thrown them down in an instantaneous extasy of adoration, like the three hours extasy of Tobias when St. Raphael at parting had shown him for one instant the loveliness of his spiritual countenance. It is not easy then for us to exaggerate the intellectual and spiritual elevation of the angels above ourselves. Yet how does Scripture represent their demeanour before the Vision of the Most Holy Trinity? They hide their faces with their wings! The Thrones quake and the Powers tremble! Their mighty and glorious nature is shaken to its very foundations; its depths are stirred and troubled; their life and strength and self-possession seem to be passing from them. Deeper and wider than the seas of earth, yet the waters of their being appear as if they would dry up before the eye of that glory; and the very simplicity of their nature, seems as if it could not endure the searching of that fire, and live.

But look at the queen of all these angelic kingdoms; at her whose empire is over land and sea, over the dim but fruitful provinces of purgatory, and over the glad realms of heaven itself. God has wound His bright

glory round about her. He has crowned her with a crown of His own devising, and studded with gems of most mysterious splendour and hidden virtues. He has raised her on a lofty throne, and all over her He has hung His own perfections. He has put into her hands an orb of far-reaching mediation, and the very cross of Christ surmounts the blessed ornament. He has trusted her hand to wield a sceptre which she wields with a second omnipotence, an omnipotence of maternal prayer. But how weak are all words to tell the queenly adorning of this Esther of the heavens! And what is the fashion of her regal bearing before the Most Holy Trinity? She is bowed down by profoundest humiliation. She abases herself to the lowest depths of spiritual homage and prostration. She is annihilated in the vivid sense of her own complete nothingness. She is only exalted and restrained upon her throne by the force of God's own power and love, which does sweet violence to her humility. She who sang the Magnificat, and has entranced the nations and the ages with its thrilling strains, now finds the breathless silence of her Immaculate Heart and her more than Angelic Mind, scarce a fitting worship of so great a majesty, of so incomparable a God. And so, like the burning bush, her whole being of unimaginable sanctity, science, and affections, is evermore consumed unconsumingly, like the choice frankincense of the angelic and human creations combined, in fragrant worship and the perfumes of ravishing sweetness before the Throne of the Holy and Undivided Three.

Shall we dare to speak of the Sacred Humanity of Jesus, the beaming sun in whose borrowed brightness Mary's moon is so unutterably fair and beautiful? What

can we venture to say of Him? Right in the heart and centre of that heavenly Vision, the radiant fires of the Godhead glowing round about it, and the flames of infinite perfections embracing, penetrating, enwreathing it, throned even there is Human Nature, while the harps and hymns of spirits and of souls are filling heaven with its praises. Purer than the sun's light and more transparent than crystal, a Sacred Heart of Human Flesh and filled with the sweetest of Human Blood, from which ten thousands of chalices on earth are daily drawing and yet they drain it not, beats as if it were the very Heart of the Holy Trinity. To that Humanity, clothed in robes of divinest light and crowned with uncreated splendours, the Eternal Father turns with love, and with delight ineffable, yearning over it with unimaginable desire. To that Humanity, as to His peculiar handiwork, made out of Mary's flesh and blood, the Eternal Spirit turns, with jubilee and satisfaction, surrounding it with the many-voiced silver sea of His uncreated love. Who shall tell the embrace in which that Humanity lies, close folded in the arms of the Eternal Word, sustained, upheld, appropriated, assumed, in a blissful and unparalleled union with His Person? With what intimate exultation, with what divine complacency, with what clear out-pouring of boundless love, with what eagerness of tranquillest possession, with what joyous satisfaction of contented wisdom, does not the magnificent Word keep in His living union the Human nature which is His? And how is not theology almost baffled to tell with what ingenuity of lavish generosity He communicates the riches of His divine things to this dear Nature? He has assumed it, and penetrates it through and through with the glory and the

light that He had in the Father's Bosom before ever the worlds were! There at least, we may at length believe, there shall be the unruffled calmness, the untouched conscious dignity, of rightful familiarity, of worthiest intimacy, of the liberty of unshrinking love. Dwelling in the midst of the everlasting fires, cradled in the lap of that incommunicable light, drawn out of the closest vicinity unto the very majesty itself, can the Sacred Humanity of Jesus know fear in heaven? Can that Humanity, to which is given the uttermost parts of the earth for its possession, and to which all judgment and pomp of doom are solemnly committed, be possessed with fear, with dread, with reverence, with blissful awe? Yes! the faith teaches us that that immaculate Flesh is pierced with reverential fear, that in that beating Sacred Heart, and down those full veins, and along those nerves, and in that brain, and in all the realities of the Human Frame which He has stooped to assume, and in every sensitive faculty of that Human Soul, which has ceased not to be utterly human because, blessed be the infinitude of His compassions! it is now utterly His, runs the living reverential fear with which the presence of the Most Holy Trinity saturates the created nature. It runs there, it will run there for evermore, while the Precious Blood circulates, in joy and gladness and rapture, and yet withal a fire of deepest, holiest, chastest fear. Every moment, like the pulses of its life, the thrill darts through it, by which the created Nature, however glorified, recognizes, acknowledges, and does homage to the incommunicable majesty of the uncreated.

Ages roll over that kingdom above. Thousands of years come and go; but they change not the life, and

touch not the felicity which is there. Countless suns rise and set, countless moons wax and wane, the planets and the stars and the huge systems of the midnight skies perform the journey of their enormous secular year, and start again. It is thus that men take account of time; but the least vibration of vicissitude is unfelt in the peace of that eternal harbour of Spirits and of Souls. And yet the Vision grows not common. Not the highest spirit, not the amplest soul, can learn familiarity with the unveiled and ever-new majesty of God. There is no such thing as becoming used to it, any more than it is possible to become satiated with it. Its fires cannot grow common: its aspect can lose nothing of its first overwhelming and immutable splendour. This is an indubitable truth, and yet one, from the laws under which we live, most difficult to realize. Every one has for ever the bewildering joy, the exulting freshness, of his first glance. It is always the same, yet it is ever new, always familiar and ever strange, always infinitely desirable and at the same time infinitely dreaded, ever an inexhaustible love and yet withal an undiminished fear, for evermore a rapturous enjoyment and yet no less an everlasting worship. The Sacred Heart itself is filled brimful of the beautiful spirit of adoration. Thus, as it was at the first hour of each inhabitant there, as it was the moment the angels stood, and were confirmed in grace, and the veil fell off the Vision, and the eye of Michael, glowing still with his celestial conquest, lighted upon it and enjoyed it first, as it was the hour when Mary Assumed stood on heaven's threshold, and when each single soul, newly arrived from earth or purgatory, began its eternal life,—so is it still, so will it be evermore, with each and all of

them. The sacred horror, as the ancients would have called it, the instinctive amazement, and childlike, or better call it creaturelike, worship, which the Vision generated in them at that first moment, neither ebbs nor flows, but stands at its original high-tide for ever. Deep awe floods like a sea the Spirits of angels and the Souls of men, and even the mighty mind of Mary is lost and loves to be lost in its depths; for the mystery before her is even to her eternally incomprehensible.

But there is something more about that Vision besides its never becoming common and familiar. Not one in that bright company but is secure of his place and crown for ever. None fears to fall. No thought, no fancy, of insecurity, breaks in upon the peace of his unalterable joy, of his indefectible possession. Yet there is no intrinsic impossibility of sinning, behind which they are inexpugnably entrenched. This the Sacred Humanity of Jesus alone can boast, by virtue of the Hypostatic Union. Mary herself is not intrinsically impeccable. Impeccable she is, like the whole multitude of the Glorified, and with her own special prerogative of sinlessness; but it is God's fidelity outside of them, not any physical or spiritual necessity within them, which is their security. It is the Vision, the operation, the vehemence, the benediction of the Vision, which makes it an impossibility that sin should ever come nigh them any more. The Vision is immovable; eternity is stationary; and so long as God is God, and because God is God, they can fall and sin no more. Grace has passed away, and with it the need of leaning upon it; but glory has to lean on God as utterly and sheerly as ever trial and probation leaned their whole weight on grace, and, even hardly so,

won their difficult way to heaven. How sweet is this law of continual dependence on God! How delightful to gratitude and to humility to find eternity as much in perpetual need of Him as ever was poor and doubtful time! How beautiful the exhibition of the sovereignty of God! O how it gladdens the heart to know, that while we have so many things out of which and beyond which to break our way, never will one link of our dear thraldom to God fall off us, never shall we do aught else, the higher we get, than fall into a more utter and complete dependence upon Him!

If these things be so, what shall we say? If the brightness of the Vision be such that it cannot grow familiar, if its vehemence be such that it makes us of itself impeccable, what words can reach the awfulness of the glittering coruscations of the Eternal? Nay, the very height of the celestial joy is in the depth of its boundless awe. While we gaze upon the Vision in worshipful fear, we gaze with more than the security of a fondled child. It will not harm us. It is our life. It will enclose us and wrap us round; it will enfold us and transform us; and will sweetly and potently press us to itself, and imprint upon our created souls a kiss of immortal peace.

Such, once more, is the object of our Faith. Will you bear with me if I go out of my way and delay you on the road, to say something which is so much on my heart to say that I cannot forbear? It is not the place to interrupt a train of thought with practical reflections; but — if the heavenly worship of the Undivided Trinity be such, what must the earthly worship of Him be, but one of prostrate adoration and of tender tears? And if

our devotion be free and easy, unhampered and disencumbered, firm of tread and bold of eye, swift of speech and decided in petition, light in the choice of words and exuberant in the flow of thought, if it be not chiefly and essentially a devotion of fear, how little like is it to the devotion of the celestial spirits! O it is the mischief of all mischiefs, this loss of holy fear! For this fear is a special gift of the Holy Ghost, to be sought for by prayer and penance, by tears and cries, by patience and by impatience, and by the very yearnings of an earnest and familiar love. It has always seemed to me to be very and unexpectedly beautiful when in the special office of our holy Father St. Philip, knowing what manner of man he was and what peculiar spirit he was of, he says in the antiphon of the Magnificat, Come, my children, and I will teach you the *fear* of the Lord: for how else shall the saint teach us divinest love?

Let us pass in review before ourselves the ancient patriarchs, and their deep awe of God, how they trembled with holy fear when God was nigh, and looked upon all things as unspeakably hallowed over which He had so much as cast His shadow. Jacob, who was so familiar with Him that he wrestled with Him and would not let Him go till He had blessed him, stands eminent among the saints of God for the gift and grace of fear. The very ritual of the old synagogue was steeped in fear and reverence. David, the man after God's own heart, wa. ever praying for an increase of holy fear. Our Blessed Lord Himself, says the apostle, "in the days of His flesh was heard because He feared." Mary and the apostles were filled, as none others ever were, with the beauty, the tenderness, and the excess of this heavenly

fear. Hundreds of dying saints, around whose flesh and souls still clung the fair white robe of their unforfeited baptismal whiteness, trembled in every limb as they pondered the possible judgments of Infinite Purity, beneath whose judicial eye they were about to stand. And if they needed this degree of fear, O what degree need we? Why do frustrate vocations so abound? Whence come the multitude of unfinished saints, that lie all round us like the broken models of a sculptor's studio? Whence so little perseverance in the devout life, and such wearying and untying even of the vows and promises whereby men have bound themselves to God? Whence but from the lack of fear! We criticize God's ways and works, and treat Him as if He were some artist who fell lawfully enough within the jurisdiction of our impertinence. We make light speeches about Him, which we could hardly make about the saints and go unblamed. Our very prayer, when we come to pray, shows more than aught else our lamentable want of fear; for what is it too often, when the pressure of sharp sorrow does not wring from us a natural cry whose very truthfulness makes it reverent,—what is it, but want of preparation first of all, ungracefulness of posture next, then petulance in our petitions, and straightway thankless oblivion of the resolutions with which we closed?

But how to mend all this? Much may be hinted in few words. Let us bring back again the old-fashioned respect for the very Name of God; for He has specially legislated for it in His commandments. Let us cultivate in ourselves a clear-sighted fear of His awful and uncertain judgments; and this will be specially done by discountenancing in ourselves any bold or trustful views

of death, as if it were easy to die, or safe for us just now, or as if we had risen to any such heights as that we should dare to desire it for ourselves. We should ponder the last judgment, not as one of the terrors of the Lord which had its use in our conversion and is misplaced now, but as being infinitely terrible to us even in the best mood and highest grace we have ever yet enjoyed. We should avoid, as a pestilence of the soul, hasty wishes that we were in purgatory, or anything like a depreciation of the insufferable smart and keenness of its chastisements. If the omnipotence, justice, and purity of God have combined to create a special fire for the purposes of pure suffering and unmitigated pain, and have given to it an unexampled vindictive power even over disembodied souls, how dare we think of ourselves under the atrocity of its biting scourges with other than a terrified submission and a heroic running for refuge to all means, however hard, of making satisfaction to the justice of God. Yet we speak sometimes as if it would be quite an easy change, quite a welcome comfort, to pass from mass and benediction, from the sweet rosary and the copious fountain of indulgences, from the fatherly jurisdiction of Peter and the feasts and sodalities of Mary, from the little trouble and great harvest of earthly suffering, from the grand power of meriting and the oft-felt hand of Jesus on our heads in absolution, and to encounter instead the whip and scourge, the blister and the burn, the fiery wounds, and long, long punishments of purgatory. Did ever saint do this, but Henry Suso once, and forthwith our Lord put off His gentleness, and rebuked him sharply for thus, not disdainfully, but somewhat lightly esteeming a rod which He had made? Light views of

sin, such as are rebuked in those deep words of inspired wisdom, Be not without fear of a forgiven sin, and rash expressions of security of salvation, all are against the exercise of a holy fear. Even when we feel, and as it were cannot help but feel, an undoubting security of our salvation, it should be no boast or joy. It may be a symptom of something sadly amiss within; or at least something so unsafe for us and our attainments, that this very sense of security may be our most fatal insecurity of all. If we try to take humbler and more humbling views of all these things, and if with this we strive to do all our actions slowly, so as not to get into God's way, cross His path, or intercept Him, then by His mercy we shall be forming in ourselves most precious habits of holy and meritorious fear. All this I have said in another shape before; and yet cannot forbear to say again. A volume would hardly contain the spiritual blessings of this fear, if they were named and commented on as fully as might be. But these fruits would at once follow even from the steady effort to acquire this grace. It would lead to reserve in speech, and so dry up an abundant source of sins. It would produce self-contempt, and thus make the prime law of charity easy. It would moderate and sober worldly joy, which otherwise makes us childish, vain, and giddy. As it consists in a deeper and more extensive knowledge of God, it would enable us the better to estimate His dignity and immensity, and the higher our esteem is of God, the more we desire Him, and the more we trust Him also; for reverence is the very ground of confidence; we cannot help but trust what we revere. Yet none of this mars the depth, the tenderness of our love; for love when deepest, as after

long separations, is silent, takes the hand it loves, and weeps most enviable tears.

Such is the Object of our Faith. There is not a movement in the whole Church, not a doctrine, or a rite, or a ceremonial, or an exercise of jurisdiction, not an energy of power and of benevolence, but, rightly interpreted, is an act of worship of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity. There is not a Church opened, a Sacrament administered or received, a Sacrifice offered, or a devotion practised, the honour and the glory of which does not reach to the Holy Trinity, and rest there, and in the highest sense rest only there. There is not a day that rises on the earth, feast or ferial, that is not throughout the universal Church a celebration and commemoration of the Holy Trinity. So it is this very day;* what strength in the thought, what consolation in the idea! so it is this very day. The pope in his palace, the episcopate in thousands of cathedrals, the monks and nuns in unnumbered cloisters, the faithful in their parishes, all that are doing good at all are doing this good, — confessing, praising, fearing, loving, adoring the Undivided Trinity. Old consecrated Asia, wise, enlightened, royal Europe, the giant regions of exuberant America, the sandy shores and streamless deserts of mysterious Africa, the young fresh strength of distant Australia, all are sending up to heaven one only voice, not prayer exactly nor praise, but the cry of childlike wonder, O beata Trinitas! See! while we are looking up into the face of this resplendent mystery, we sink and sink in the depths of our own vileness. It seems too much that we

* Written on Trinity Sunday.

are to see God, incredibly too much that we are to possess Him. Is it not an infinite blessing that He does not simply pass us over and ignore us? Sometimes in the stillness of the night, in the hush of prayer, when the soul is suspended it knows not how or in what place, it may so seem as if we might come to die, and He forget us, miss us and take no note of our disappearance; and in the horror of that awful imagination how sweet the undoubting knowledge of that eternal truth, that we are encompassed, girded up, wound round, and clasped to Him, with His everlasting Presence, His universal knowledge, His illimitable Power! Sancta Trinitas, Unus Deus, miserere nobis!

SECTION II.

THE CREATOR IN HIS OWN CREATION.

Now supposing we were in some way in possession of this Catholic doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and knew nothing more, it will, I think, be obvious that we never could from that knowledge divine in what way God would be pleased to operate externally, if He did so at all. We could only infer negatives, namely, that such and such things He would *not* do. If we contemplated Him in the glory, bliss and self-sufficiency of His unbeginning eternity, we could not have gathered that He would have created worlds at all, or produced any external creatures, or ever proceeded out of Himself, or that there would have been any divine operations beyond those two necessary operations, the Generation of the Son and the Procession of the Holy Spirit, which are co-eternal with the Godhead. On the contrary we should perhaps have in-

ferred the very opposite. Then if His intention to create had been disclosed to us, we could not have advanced one single step further than the disclosure itself. From a view of His inherent perfections we could not have conceived what manner of production His creation would be, whether spiritual, material, or mixed, or any of these three, or all the three together, or none of the three, but some inconceivable other things, or what any of the three mean, or would be like, or by what process they would be produced. Perhaps we should not even have perceived of ourselves that if the Three Divine Persons act externally at all, They will do so altogether; the whole Trinity will act. The numerical unity of the Godhead is not a self-evident inference from the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The whole history of doctrine shows it. Neither when creation had actually taken place, could we have conjectured that God would vouchsafe some day to take part and place in His own creation. Possibly we should have supposed not. But if that gracious design had been revealed to us, still we could have deduced nothing more from it. We must have stopped with the revelation. We could not by any stretch of reason have conceived any intelligible plan by which He would execute this His loving purpose. The probability is that the feeling of lowliness which belongs to us as creatures would have led us to conjecture, that He would have, as it were, interfered with His creatures from without, in an occasional, corrective, and legislative way, here and there, as might be wanted, with more or less clearness, and meddling to the least possible degree with the freedom of will which He originally gave us. I say we should probably have conjectured in some such way, because this occasional,

corrective, and legislative interference is pretty nearly the whole idea of God which multitudes of men have, and they are irritable when more is attempted to be forced upon them. Thus we should, I think, have been surprised and perplexed at finding angels and men created, not in a state of nature, but in a state of grace. From that we might have deduced much. It would have given us the clue to many things. Then if we had been told further, that God would graciously interfere in a public visible way, we might have got some idea of Sinai and the Law, but we never should have dreamed of an Incarnation. Again, the Incarnation given, we should have expected some such Messiah as was the day-dream of the Jews, triumphant and conquering, visibly restoring the balance of right and wrong, impressing the minds of men, as they are so well calculated to be impressed, by pomps and pageants, worthy of His power, His justice and His magnificence. And in all these things we should have been wrong.

What I want to show is, that we cannot argue from God to His works; but only from His works to Himself; at most, from what He has done once to what He may be graciously pleased to do again: and it is important to bear this distinction in mind. The so-called philosophical literature of the day, subjecting God to the genius and spirit of some of its favorite sciences, without intending to do so or seeing that it actually does so, is full of arguments and trains of thought of this kind. They speak as if God were under some sort of necessity to do this or that, and to act in such or such a way, as if He had an orbit in which He must revolve, a groove out of which He must not run. Moreover, a very considerable pro-

portion of the objections which men make to the Catholic religion are based on arguments of this kind, without a suspicion on the part of those who use them how essentially irreverent they are, and how they are as fatal to their own heresies as to our faith. Not content with forming an inductive science from the observations which the world, the Bible, and the Church afford them of the divine dealings, they would fain make deductions from the intrinsic perfections, such as the power or the goodness, of the Three Divine Persons, just as men make the whole sciences of geometry and arithmetic from the three ideas of space, time, and number.

But I will go a step further. Not only are we unable to proceed of ourselves to anything like true or reasonable conjectures of any of God's future and unexampled operations, but what God does is so unlike what we should have expected Him to do, and full of a significancy so completely at variance with the genius of our finite minds or our natural principles of conduct, that we are apparently unable to grasp them and to fuse them into our understandings. Multitudes of men believe the Incarnation, who disbelieve Transubstantiation: yet out of twenty arguments they will use against the last, the chances are that nineteen would lie equally against the first. Nevertheless, they do not perceive it. They have not caught the spirit of the Incarnation, or mastered the supernatural principles it so abundantly involves; and while they think they would die for the Incarnation, they are rejecting the doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament, for a reason probably which would equally constrain us to pronounce the Incarnation contrary to reason, unparalleled in the past, unworthy of God, and opposed to the

fitness of things. So again, many pure theists reject the Incarnation for reasons which are exactly as cogent against Creation, in which they believe and from which they draw their whole system of God, His attributes and our duties to Him. They miss seeing the supernatural character of Creation, and that it has a sort of headship over the mysteries which receive light from it and reflect enormous light upon it. If they, with their principles, contemplated God's eternity before Creation, it would not be surprising if the eternity of matter and the ever self-producing cycle of creatures seemed to them at last the most consistent scheme, and open to the fewest objections. In other words, they might become atheists: for a deist is only an illogical atheist, and an atheist a logical deist. The outburst of protestant indignation at the report of our Lady's apparition at La Salette illustrates very neatly what I am intending. Pious members of the protestant Establishment urged and published such objections as these. If blasphemy and the desecration of Sunday in France were the causes of her apparition, why should she have delayed it so long? Nothing, however, can be more futile than the objection alleged. The writer forgot that Christ came because of sin, and left the world four thousand years while he was tarrying. Again, it was said, Why appear to a poor lad and a simple girl? She should have gone to the bishop, or to the prefet, or at least to the sous-prefet! Who can help thinking of Jesus and the Cave of Bethlehem and the rude shepherds to whom He showed Himself? In like manner, during the curious national frenzy which took place in consequence of the establishment of the Catholic Hierarchy in England, an infidel journal observing, upon the fact of pro-

testants chalking over the walls, No Wafer Gods, said that it seemed to reasoning men who held themselves sublimely aloof from both parties, an absurd inconsistency for those to make any serious objection to the Catholic who looks at the Host and says it is God, who themselves require you to look into the face of a new-born Babe and to believe it is the Eternal and Immutable God.

From all this I conclude as follows:—That we have no sort of reason for conjecturing beforehand how God will condescend to appear, to be, to hide Himself, or to manifest Himself, in His own creation: That the ways in which He has actually appeared, lived, hidden, and manifested Himself, are quite different from what we should have expected: That in all probability if we had conjectured at all, we should have conjectured just the reverse of what really happened: That therefore in speaking of God and His ways we must, unless we have express authority for the contrary in each case, abandon all lines of argument which are simply and exclusively based on our own notions of what is becoming or unbecoming so infinite a majesty: That from God's past dealings with His creatures, we see that there can be no great or small with Him; for where the difference is infinite, degrees are imperceptible: and finally that as unexpectedness is no argument against a supposed condescension, if we have other good reasons for believing it, so the analogy of many similar and congenial condescensions is an additional proof of the truth of each of them, and fixes or enlarges our ideas of God.

God is present in His own Creation. If His presence were withdrawn, it would all, and instantaneously, subside into nothingness. Without His presence, therefore,

nothing lives, acts, or is real. But at the same time He has not appeared in His own creation in the way in which we should beforehand have expected. He exists in nature as a hidden God. Our reason finds Him out as a hidden God. Revelation discloses Him as a hidden God. We are told that the heavens declare Him and tell His handiwork, and that the invisible things of God are known by those that are seen. And nothing is more true. Yet it is true also, and it is His peculiarity, that He makes Himself known by hiding Himself. It is the glory of God to conceal the word, says Solomon, and the glory of kings to search out the speech. And if we interpret the Word to be our Lord, and kings as representing the royal people, or Christians, we shall come very near to that peculiar presence of God which is the subject of our treatise. Thus, it is true to say, that when we look abroad to relieve our eyes by open and broad manifestations of the splendour and sovereignty of God, we find at our first glance that the aspect of the visible world renders Him invisible, nay, that it positively contradicts Him, and that what claims most to be His own, namely, religion, does in the hands and lives of its professors represent Him least worthily of all. This is not only true of His presence in the moral and spiritual world, but in a certain sense of that common omnipresence whereby He upholds and sustains all created things. What can be more quiet and gentle, more shy or unobtrusive, if I may venture on such terms, than the way in which He invigorates His own creation? A triple cord of His presence is bound round all things, and penetrates through their substance; for He is with all things by essence, by presence, and by power. By essence, because His substance embraces all

extremities and penetrates all parts. By presence, because He sees, hears, knows, and understands all things. By power, because He concurs immediately to all actions, and His hands hold all things, and the hand even that does evil, and the eye that sees unlawfully, and the brain that plans iniquity, all profanely use the concurrence of their Creator to the material act, while the evil is all their own. How little men realize even so much as this!

Now, I will ask you to put these two things steadily before you: first of all, the vision of God and of His Intrinsic Perfections; and secondly, our own incompetence to conjecture beforehand the way in which God would be, would act, would hide, and would disclose Himself in His own Creation. Let us picture to ourselves the Majesty of the Undivided Trinity as it was before Creation began, and pass at once from that to the Blessed Sacrament on a Catholic altar. My business is devotion, not controversy; I have, not to prove, but simply to state. What is the revelation which the Christian dogma of the Blessed Sacrament makes to us? This is the question we have to ask ourselves, and in answering it we must bear in mind throughout that axiom of theology, Whatever God does outside Himself, is done by the whole Trinity.

The doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament, full of a clear faith in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, teaches that the Second Person, the Eternal Word, who has been from the beginning in the Bosom of the Father, and is coequa and consubstantial with Him, did with the Father and the Holy Ghost decree, that He would take part and place in His own Creation. He predestinated for Himself a spotless and immaculate Mother, of true flesh and blood and mere human nature, a veritable descendant of Eve.

He fitted her by unparalleled communications of grace to be His true Mother; and after a mysterious delay of four thousand years, the reasons of which are beyond our investigation, and can be reached only by pious conjectures, He was actually conceived in her by the operation of the Holy Ghost; and in due time was born. From the first moment, He was in full possession and use of His reason; but nevertheless He surrounded Himself with all the accidents of Human Infancy, and all its concomitant indignities and infirmities. When men beheld Him, when they scanned the dimensions of His limbs, and watched them lengthen, thicken, and strengthen, when they noted His tears and cries and the inarticulate plaints of childhood, it must have seemed irresistibly plain to them that He was a human person. Yet this was not so. He had assumed human nature. His nature as Man was as truly human as their own. But by the most marvellous of miracles it had no human person to depend on, no human subsistence to uphold it. So that it was true to say that He was *a* man, if by that expression we imply a human personality.* How then did His human Nature subsist? By another miracle of the most portentous kind, and of which there was not, either to human sense or reason, the very slightest hint or vestige. It rested on His Divine Person. His Divine Person was to it instead of a human person. But He did not on that account forego His Divine Nature. That also remained, and rested on the same one Divine

* There is no indefinite article in Greek or Latin; and if by the English expression "a man" we only imply nature, then it is not untrue or incorrect; but if the expression has the further force of implying personality, then it is of course untrue; or if it is at all likely so to be understood by others, it is unsafe.

Person unconfused with His Human Nature. He was one Person, with two uncommingled Natures. But of this there was not then, nor is there now, to His creatures, any proof whatever but His own authority and the testimony of His own works. Reason suspected nothing of it, before it was told, and could see nothing of it when it was told; and as to the senses, the mystery seemed to give them a direct contradiction. But furthermore, these two Natures which co-existed in one Person were perfectly distinct; and as it would be blasphemy to assert that the two Natures prove two Persons, so would it be blasphemy to maintain that the one Person implies the confusion, blending, and commingling of the two natures. The Person, moreover, acted upon the Human Nature in conferring upon all its operations an infinite worth, because of the Union of the two, while the Human Nature could in no wise react back upon the immutable Divine Person. Can anything go beyond the mysteriousness of this mystery?

Thus the Creator appeared and took part and place in His own Creation, in a most divine and unexpected way. When the Babe of flesh and Blood lay sleeping on His Mother's lap, would reason or sense have supposed that even in sleep He was in full and energetic possession and active use of an intellect to which all the intelligent reasoning power of ancient Greece and modern Europe combined could not attain, that He who began yesterday was of a truth eternal and unbeginning, that He was, in that moment of sleep, omnipotent, and was ruling the world and holding up all the ponderous creation in the hollow of His tiny hand, and that He was enjoying amid the starts and sighs and uneasinesses of infantine slumber

the full blaze of the Beatific Vision? His behaviour was of a piece with the mystery of His advent. He did not seem to court notice. On the contrary He shrank from it. His very first instinct was an impulse to hide Himself, and even to fly when He was sought; and the whole of the Three and Thirty Years gives us the impression, speaking in a merely human way, as if He never overcame this propensity, did violence to Himself whenever He acted otherwise, and afterwards settled back to the Hidden Life as if it were a centre of gravity to His character. He came for the express purpose of manifesting Himself, and He did nothing but hide Himself. The one thing about Him which it imported His creatures to know was that He was God; and this one thing He took all possible pains to conceal, and seemed sometimes in the strangest manner directly to contradict. It appeared, if I may say so, that He would almost rather equivocate than make a direct and open confession of His Divinity. And when Peter made it first of all men, our Lord at once showed the immense worth of it by making him the unfailing rock of His Church, while at the same time He intimated that it was not flesh and blood, and so not even His Human Nature, but the Eternal Father, who by the interference of an express revelation, had disclosed the mystery to him.

By His own appointment He had but Thirty-Three short years to remain on earth, and no less a work than a new religion to teach, a new empire to found, and the supernatural redemption of a fallen race to accomplish. Yet He would not anticipate any one of the gradual steps of Infancy. His Infancy hid Him, and therefore He clung to it. He would seem to learn to speak as others

did, to walk steadily as others did, and to be weaned from the breast as others were, to grow as others grew, to practise His fingers and become expert, as others did. And so twelve years went on. Nothing was done. We hear no more of the shepherds, and the kings were far away in their own land. Mary, Joseph and the angels, the aged Simeon and obscure Anna, nothing had transpired beyond that little circle yet. Then it seemed, I say *seemed*, for what our Lord vouchsafed to do necessarily gives us a view of Him, but it is our view, not necessarily His sole or principal or full design,—it seemed as if this hidden life was to come to an end. He must, *must* was His own word, betake Himself to His Father's business. He did so; He left His Mother secretly, and went to the temple to teach. Yet even then, as if by the operation of the same instinct, He began teaching by seeming to ask questions and to learn. The separation however gives His Mother pain; and though He has mysteriously said He *must* be about His Father's work, He seems to catch at her sorrow and make an opportunity of it to get back again into the hidden life. Then follow eighteen years of seeming inaction. He sanctified Mary, He prepared Joseph for death, He was subject to them both. The more we think of these eighteen years the more inexplicable, on our notions and principles, will their mystery become; and at the same time the more clearly shall we perceive their harmony with the rest of the Incarnation.

Thus three years only are left for His public life; and yet how strange even then the method of His publicity. He courts notice even less than the Baptist did before. Persons gather round Him in quiet mysterious ways, by a sort of silent attraction, and for hidden reasons, like Na-

thaniel under the fig-tree. He avoids crowds, on the whole shuns cities, does not approach the great, and rather lets men take the initiative with Him. He goes to desert places, and keeps hiding Himself from time to time, as if by instinct, in the gorges of the mountains. When He teaches, He hides His meaning under figures, parables, and deep apophthegms: and He makes it quite a special privilege of His own chosen few that they should be taught without parables. Yet they only come to understand Him very gradually. They hardly realized Him to themselves even to the end. When He worked miracles, for the most part He begged for those in whose favour He had worked them not to divulge them. When captious persons asked Him questions, He either answered by another question, or replied to their state of mind and according to their moral dispositions rather than to their words, and thus dismissed them foiled and silenced, yet as much perplexed as ever. When He cast devils out of the possessed, He commanded them to be silent and not to make Him known. And repeatedly when He was attracting notice, as at Capharnaum and at the Pool of Bethsaida, He glided away through the crowd unseen, using perhaps the gift He has so often conferred upon His saints of making themselves invisible. And all this was confined to one obscure province of the Roman Empire, and in that most jealously and exclusively to the one people to whom He was sent. Others He repulsed, called them dogs, and even when they took it kindly and touched Him by their humility, He said nevertheless that He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He died having hardly made any converts, leaving the glory and the noise and the visible pomp of conversion to the apos-

tles. He shrank from it as displeasing to Himself, or as unbecoming, as it drew Him out of the close shade of the hidden life. Yet we call this, by comparison we are obliged truly to call it, His Public Life. Surely we may say to Him with His prophet Isaias of old, Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Saviour!

But this came to an end. It ended in a hiding-place the densest, the darkest, the most obscure and ignominious of all, the shadows of His ever-blessed and adorable Passion. If sense and reason would have pronounced judgment against the Hypostatic Union, when they gazed upon the Babe of Bethlehem, the Passion must have seemed to them proof direct and incontestable against His Divinity. For the more completely He fell into the hands of His creatures, the more closely He drew the curtains of concealment around His Godhead. As the Passion went on, it traversed every part and searched every corner of His Humanity. Every interior anguish of man was experienced in unaccompanied lonelines and in unexampled bitterness. Every exterior pain, and shame, and insult, and degradation, fell upon Him with the violence of a hail-storm. And in every step, the less He looked like God. The more men buffeted Him and spat upon Him and rained the burning blows of the heavy scourge upon Him, and bruised His limbs, and drew His blood, and lacerated His head, and deformed and disfigured His human comeliness, the more He seemed to withdraw His Divinity inwards and coil it up secretly within Himself. He used it only that He might live to suffer more and so look less like God, or that He might keep His angels away that they might not break

in upon the hideous drama with the vindictive brightness of their power. Nay, even what He permitted thickened His concealment; for He let Judas betray Him, Peter deny Him, and the rest run timidly away from Him; and would they who had a right to know Him best have done this, had they fully realized that He was God? Will the scourges mark His flesh? Will the thorns penetrate His brow? Will the nails enter His hands and feet, and the hammer drive them through, according to common laws? Yes! all will be as humanly natural, as were the processes of the Sacred Infancy. And the paler He grew, and the whiter, and the fainter, and the weaker, the more His drooping eye was full of patient weariness, and His colourless lips parched with thirst, and His helpless frame parched with the long continuance and desperate cruelty of corporal agony, the less all the while He looked like God. But the decisive test will come. Death! Can God die? Can the Eternal end? Can the Sinless suffer the punishment expressly invented for the sinful? Yes! death draws nigh, and He bows His head, assenting to the blow, and God is dead three hours after noon upon a hill nigh to an ancient oriental city! Was ever anything more unspeakably hidden than all this? Its very awfulness is partly in its being so hidden. Look up into the face of the Holy Trinity; see the vivid coruscations of His intolerable glory, before creation was: measure His majesty; fathom His wisdom; calculate the possible condescensions of His love, and look at Calvary!

But the Triduo with its almost intolerable mysteries was over. Our Lord had overcome death, and by His own power had broken the bands of the grave. He had

animated His Body in the tomb; His Blood had been restored to His Heart. An incomparable glory clothed both His Soul and Body. It had become impassible, subtle, agile, and resplendent, the model on which the bodies of His servants shall be at the Resurrection. Here, at least, was a proof of His Divinity, positive and irrefragable. Here was an evidence of His mission to which the most stubborn unbelief must bow; and we might fairly expect that the publicity of His Resurrection should at least equal the openness and notoriety of His Passion and His Cross. Yet an exactly opposite rule was followed. While the shame had been in the light of day, on the bare hill-top, and in the sight of hostile multitudes, the Resurrection was accomplished in the grey of early dawn, without ministers or witnesses but a group of holy angels who needed neither proof nor evidence. Here is the same propensity to a Hidden Life, which our Lord vouchsafes to manifest everywhere. Preparations are even made beforehand for the more complete concealment of this glorious mystery. Men are allowed to remember that He had predicted His Resurrection, and to suspect that His apostles will steal His Body away, and falsely assert that He has risen; and the guards who are set to watch are bribed to withhold such evidence as they could have given, and which they themselves could not have explained. Thus in the most natural way did our Lord contrive to hide the splendour of His Resurrection. But if, as might well be conceived, human eyes were unworthy to behold that surpassing mystery, we might expect that when risen He would manifest Himself in His strength as He had manifested Himself in His weakness. The Resurrection was the grand evidence

of His religion. The primary object for which the college of the Apostles was instituted, and the vacancy of Judas filled up, was to bear testimony to the Resurrection in that they had seen and conversed with Jesus Risen. And behold what a mystery it was of which they had to give evidence! God had been in His own creation in that triduo, it would seem, more wonderfully and more unexpectedly than ever. His Soul had hidden itself under the earth, and was gaining subterranean victories both in Limbus and in Purgatory, and His separate Soul was to be adored as God, by virtue of its Hypostatic Union with the Person of the Eternal Word. In the garden tomb, hidden among vine plants, and pomegranates, and the thin shadows of the olives, and the training tendrils of the gourds, was a white and cold Human Body, scarred and seamed with countless wounds and weals, helplessly wrapped round in fair perfumed cloths, the ministry of reverence and of love. Before that Body must all creation prostrate itself, for there is the living God, worshipful and adorable, by virtue of the same Hypostatic Union of the Word.* For the Resurrection was no new Incarnation. What our Lord had once assumed, He never put away. Quod semul assumpsit nunquam dimisit; this was the axiom St. John Damascene contributed to the science of theology. Death could not sever the Human Nature from the Divine Person. This is essential, as we know, to the Christian faith. But this is not all. On the roots of the olive-trees in the Garden of Gethsemane there is, still fresh, His Precious Blood; it is standing like dew on the stones of the pavement of Jerusalem; men touch it, tread on it, move it

* Catechis. Concil. Trident. p. i. cap. v. quæst. viii.

from place to place; it has forced its way amid the plaited braids of the scourges and thongs, which are lying just where the executioners flung them aside; it is thick upon the wood of the Cross like the unction of a king; the garments for which men threw the dice are full of it: none of it, save what was on Mary's hands, has been reverently provided for. Yet each one of those drops of Blood angels and men must worship with divine worship; for it is hypostatically united to the Person of the Word. And was ever God so, — not kneaded, not blended, not compounded—God forbid—but so thoroughly in His creation, and hidden in it, as He was then? And all this, together with the union of the Body and the Soul, the new beginning of the beatings of the Sacred Heart, and the collection of His Precious Blood into His veins, whether by His own simple will or by the ministry of the eager angels, is involved in the mystery of the Resurrection!

But if it was so important that the evidence of this mystery should be established to the satisfaction of the whole world, if the salvation of countless souls depended upon it, if the apostles were appointed mainly or at least primarily because of it, the forty days of His Risen Life will at least be marked by some degree of additional publicity. Just the contrary. It is the most mysteriously hidden life of all. Bethlehem was notoriety and Nazareth an outward life compared with this. He certainly remained on earth for forty days; but where He was, and how He spent the time, we do not know. He kept appearing here and there, from time to time, now to one, now to another, one while to a few, another while to many. Some fourteen of these gracious apparitions are

recorded. Even as appearances they are filled with secresy and concealment. When He appeared to the two disciples going to Emmaus, He only disclosed Himself as He was vanishing. When He showed Himself to Magdalene it was under the species of a gardener, not His own. When He appeared at the lake, they did not know it was He, and then it flashed upon them, and they cried, It is the Lord! And at another apparition, while many believed, some doubted. What passed between His apostles and Himself respecting the kingdom of God, the constitution of the Church, the matter and form of the sacraments,* and, the like, was not committed to the publicity of the Written Word but shrouded in the guise of apostolical tradition. What else He did, and where He went, we cannot tell. In old times there was an idea that He had gone all over the earth, touching everywhere with His blessed Feet the spots where afterwards an altar should be erected and the mass offered, so consecrating the sites of all His churches beforehand. This was simply a pious and devotional thought, as it does not appear that any revelations are quoted in its behalf. It was a beautiful expression of the days of poetic faith, of those times of pilgrimage, when the Holy Land seemed all in all to men, when they brought shiploads of its sacred earth to European countries, and were yearning to make every hallowed spot into a Palestine. In truth the Forty Days are hidden from us by our Lord Himself. All we can conjecture from analogy is that our Blessed Lady was in some way concerned with them, and that perhaps the greatest portion of His time was spent with her, in St. John's House, renewing and repeating

* Gerbert. De eo quod est juris div. et eccles. in sacramentis.

the privacy of the House of Nazareth, or the Forty Days of Bethlehem before the Purification.

But the Forty Days came to an end; and the mystery of the Ascension came. He left the world almost as secretly as He came into it. His Mother and a little band were the favoured few whom He admitted to witness the mystery; and so, three hours after midday, from sunny Olivet He rose up to heaven in the calmness of His own divine power, attended by a multitudinous retinue of angels keeping holyday, and encompassed with the first fruits of His triumph, the Souls of forty centuries liberated from Limbus and from Purgatory, and bearing up with Him those beautiful anticipations of the general resurrection,* the bodies of the Saints that rose with Him and walked the streets of Jerusalem on Easter Day. A cloud received Him out of the sight of earth; and entering heaven, He placed His Human Nature in unimaginable exaltation at the Right Hand of the Father, where the heavens shall contain it in its proper species until the restitution of all things. Yet even then the unconquerable propensity, as we should call it if speaking of one of ourselves, or the divine characteristic, as religiously speaking we should term it, manifests itself still more and more. He had Himself preluded to it by words that He dropped as if by chance, and by assurances and predictions that sounded only like the soothing speeches of affectionate consolation. When hiddenness seemed at an end, then it began as it never had been before. When secresy to our limited ideas was impossible, then was it deepened and darkened more

* Different Fathers follow different traditions on this question.

than ever; and by a series of divine operations it became a secresy the most fascinatingly beautiful and magnificently complete that can be conceived. From His public glory in heaven He descended at once the whole way to the sweetly imagined privacy of the Consecrated Host. For His worship of sight above He took the worship of faith below. And not once for all did He do this, but, with intense delight renewed each hour, He descends and is ever descending into the lowly bosom of those little common trivial creatures of Bread and Wine, or rather into the bosom of that nothingness where they have just vacated what they filled.

Thus did everything which it appeared would stay His fondness for the hidden life give Him as it were a fresh spring, a new impulse, to bury Himself deeper and deeper in His own creation. The Incarnation hid more than it disclosed. It added new mysteries instead of explaining old ones. His obligation to begin His Father's work glided into a reason for another delay of eighteen years. His public life did but illuminate His love of privacy. His Passion, which should have drawn forth His Divinity, drove it in. The mystery of the Resurrection, by the publication of which the world was to be converted, was enveloped in profoundest secresy. The Ascension, which looked like a closing triumph of the war, only began His Sacramental Life, the most impenetrable mystery of all. Thus the heretical habit of mind is to rest on the Ascension as an end, a limit, a barrier, a completion. The Catholic habit of mind, which regards our Lord, and the Church, and the Sacraments, as always living and energizing and going on, and not as historical facts or dramas that are past, does not rest

upon the Ascension, but goes on to Corpus Christi, the Feast of Jesus Present. It can rest on nothing till it reaches Jesus Himself in heaven and on earth as well. It is a not uncommon illustration of this that persons brought up in heresy, when they betake themselves to the study of Catholic theology, are often disappointed at the little stress laid upon the Ascension, and are for the moment chilled by the doctrine of St. Thomas that it added nothing to our Lord, and conferred upon His Sacred Humanity nothing more than "decency of place."

Our Lord's manner is as though it were a joy to Him to be back again on earth, so true are the words of Scripture that His delight is to be with the children of men. He renews His Incarnation over again in the Blessed Sacrament. The accidents of the Host, unsubstantiated, rest on Him, the figure of His Human Nature without a human person: and all the similitudes of the Blessed Sacrament and the Incarnation, which we treated of at length before, are illustrations of the same thing. But chiefly does He gather into this one sacramental hiddenness, all the hiddennesses He had ever concealed Himself in before: so that none of them should pass away from Him or be lost to Him. The helplessness of His Sacred Infancy, the way in which He was in the hands of others, the apparent contradiction of the senses, all those things which hid Him in Bethlehem of old, now hide Him in the Host. The hiddenness of the Holy House at Nazareth is renewed and surpassed by the hiddenness of the tabernacle. The secresy of His public life, and the figurative manner of His teaching, find their antitypes in the Exposition and Benediction of the

Blessed Sacrament, and in the ways in which He touches, teaches, and affects the soul in Communion. The hiddenness of His Passion finds its awful representation in sacrilege and blasphemy and in the wickedness of contempt, audacity, and neglect. Yet even there the frightful indignities of the Blessed Sacrament, which make even faith sometimes for a moment wish it were unbelief, have had their forerunners in the Passion and in the singular mysteries of the separate Body and the scattered Blood of Good Friday and Holy Saturday. The hiddenness of His Risen Life is exactly analogous to the Blessed Sacrament, as in both He is impassible and glorified, and in both most hidden when it seems to our blind eyes as if the interests of souls most required Him to be disclosed. But a more minute consideration of these things belongs to another place.*

Such is the revelation of God which the Catholic doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament makes to us; and which it is necessary to put alongside of the doctrine of the Most Holy Trinity, in order that we may understand them both. Our dear Lord comes in the Blessed Sacrament, as dumb and meaner than a child, to live two lives; one towards men, because He is God; one towards God, because He is man. It is this latter one which we are now considering. The Blessed Sacrament is the exponent of God. We can nowhere get a more clear or more extensive knowledge of God than we can gather from the Blessed Sacrament. God is the model of it, the idea of it. It reveals His intimate and peculiar perfections more than anything else. Our truest notions

* See Book IV.

of Him are derived from the operations of the Holy Eucharist. It is not only the sun of Christian theology; but it illuminates all the kingdoms of matter, mind, and grace, and glory, together with the moral mysteries of the world, and that long series of vicissitudes and romantic experiences which make up the history of the human race. The Blessed Sacrament resumes all the operations of God into one point, and there manifests them to us. A riddle itself, it unriddles the enigma of the universe; and it is the light of the world though it is itself but darkness visible. Short of the Beatific Vision, it is of itself the plainest, the surest, the gladdest, and the nearest sight of God, which His creatures can enjoy.

SECTION III.

GOD SOUGHT AND FOUND.

THE life of the Blessed Sacrament towards God may be considered from three different points of view. From one point it is a life of love; for the Sacred Humanity of Jesus upon earth alone loves and worships adequately the presence and the majesty of God on earth. The worship of the Blessed Sacrament is co-extensive with the perfections of God, by reason of the worth which the worship of the Sacred Humanity derives from its Union with the Word. It is from this point of view that gentle and self-forgetting hearts, sick with the world's forgetfulness of God, and frightened with the world's irritability with God, delight to look at this sweet Sacrament. There is rest and satisfaction, balm and

fragrance, shade and coolness, to the weary mind, in the thought of all the love and worship which God is thus receiving from out the invisible depths of the Holy Eucharist. From another point of view it is a life of equality, of equality with God; for the Blessed Sacrament is actively ruling the world, and is felt contemporaneously in every point of space, at every moment of time, in every cause that is anywhere producing an effect, and in every force that is thrilling, moving, acting, reacting, adjusting, and balancing, in all the mechanism of heaven and earth. And this is a view peculiarly dear to the lovers of Jesus, in that it magnifies His divinity even in the very dimmest caverns of His obscurity and seeming littleness. It is the underground thought in all meditation of His mysteries which gives them their peculiar attraction and unearthly beauty. From the third point of view it is a life of imitation; and it is from this point of view that we are now regarding it. It is a copy of God, an image, a transcript, a shadow, an impression, a sign, a mould. Nay, more, it is God copying and transcribing Himself, reflecting Himself in the spotless mirror of Transubstantiation. It is His own imitation of His own life in His own world.

We must keep this single view clearly before us, while we travel as it were through the world, and range through its sciences and the kingdoms of its knowledge, and see with what closeness of similitude, varying here and there, yet never discrepant, all manifestations of God are analogous to the Blessed Sacrament. It seems to have been modelled on some idea in the Divine Mind, and to express what might be reverently and metaphorically called His centre of gravity, that is, the point on which all the

forces of His character (may I dare to use the word?) would in our human way be said to be collected; for the Divine Simplicity is really inexpressible. God's sacramental Presence is an exact image of His natural presence and of His grace-giving presence; neither is it open to any additional objections, to any objections to which they are not equally and undoubtedly liable. Thus, in answering objections to the doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament, we keep opening out continually new and rich mines of devotional thought and feeling.

Seen by the moonlight of reason, as well as by the sunshine of revelation, all creation lies before us as a vast region, every point of which is a hiding-place of Him who made it. With Him, to reveal Himself is to conceal Himself. It seems a sort of necessity of His incomprehensible perfections. It adheres inseparably to the mystery of the Infinite stooping to disclose Himself to the finite. As we see a star sometimes when we do not look directly at it and lose it from the field of vision when we do, or as we smoke and stain the glass in order to see the sun, so is it with God; we see Him best when He is veiled. He is to us what the face of Moses was to the people: we cannot look upon it because of its exceeding brightness. However much we might expect beforehand that God would interfere in His own world in some brilliant, striking, majestic, and overwhelming manner, however much it would seem desirable that He should so interfere for the greater sanctifying of His creatures and the swifter destruction of evil, it appears that He does not do so, for reasons drawn from our side of the question as well as from His own. His character, or which with Him is the same thing, His perfection, so

far as He has been mercifully pleased to let us know anything about it, makes Him desire to be sought, and to be found, but only to be found by diligent, humble, awe-stricken, and worshipful investigation. His boundless perfection, as well as His love of us, render this in some way necessary. Creation is as it were the exhibition to us of the various magnificence of His attributes; and yet we do not see Him; we cannot make sure of Him. We know when He has been and gone, as Jacob knew, when he said, God was here and I knew it not; or as the disciples at Emmaus said when He disappeared, Did not our hearts burn within us? He is truly almost as hidden under the many-coloured veil of external nature as in the home of His inaccessible Essence, nearly as in comprehensible in His outward operations as in His in trinsical perfections. Meanwhile, constituted as we are, it is best also for the ennobling of our moral and spiritual nature that we should have to seek Him before we find Him. With men the process of learning is both more precious and more instructive than the result of learning; and the use of our powers of greater consequence than their acquisitions. So in its measure is it in our relations with God. Our present life is not one of enjoyment, but one of probation. Virtue is the meritorious seeking of Him; the finding of Him at last our gratuitous reward. The possession of God is our eternal joy; to "feel after Him if haply we may find Him" in the dark, near to every one of us, though to all of us invisible, this is faith, hope, and charity, and the exercise of all the virtues. And thus it is for reasons drawn from our side as well as His, that God does not reveal Himself to us except by concealing Himself: and as the Blessed Sacra-

ment is His chief hiding-place, so is it His chief revelation.

Let us take the Bible as an illustration of this principle. It is eminently a revelation of God. This is its professed object. It was written for this end, to be a plainer world than the world without us, easier to read than nature, safer to decipher than the documents of our own consciences, to tell us deeper things in a plainer way and with a completer sympathy. Yet who will not acknowledge that the extent of our knowledge also widens the horizon of our ignorance? He hid Himself under a strange trivial law in paradise, and in the cool time of the evening air He walked hiddenly amid the thickets of its aromatic shrubberies. He hid Himself under the promise of Mary's seed, and forthwith Eve misinterpreted it with natural human hurry. He hid Himself with the seed of Seth, and then with eight persons in an ark. He hid Himself with one family of patriarchs, and then with one people, anything but remarkable for goodness, greatness, or attractiveness. The system of the synagogue was a system of mysteries, and it preluded to the hiddenness of the Incarnation. He disclosed Himself to men in the Bible as having human passions and giving way to human inequalities. He seems to praise deceit, and to sanctify the patriarchs by what appear on the surface to be dubious actions. The destiny of the Canaanitish nations perplexes men's ideas of right and wrong, and cases are put and left which seem incompatible with either human liberty on the one hand or divine predestination on the other. What is told of us is more often than not a veil cast over God, and what is left untold seems often to be just what the nature of a revelation would lead

Him to disclose. It is more narrative than didactic, and the amount and manner of its inspiration it is quite a problem to fix. Hence it is not so much a systematic body of teaching, as a collection of supernatural principles, of divine axioms, of celestial definitions, out of which as many sciences and theologies might be deduced. What is imitable is not clearly marked off from what is only admirable; and the allegorical is continually encroaching on the literal. Miracles assume laws, and prophecies look onward to fulfilments. In a word, regarded in a merely human way, the Bible is the most unexpected kind of book which could be conceived. It is a system of hieroglyphics, and Jesus is the key to it all. By the light of the Incarnation, of which the Blessed Sacrament is the special and living mystery, all is plain. Nothing can be more wonderful, more magnificent, more deep, more wise, more harmonious, more self-consistent. But without that light what can creatures do but "wrest to their own destruction" one of God's chiefest mercies?

But it is not only in its matter and structure that the Bible so plainly discloses a hidden God. Its direct teaching expressly asserts it as a doctrine. Let us consider what results from a collective view of the following passages, some of which have already been quoted. It is the glory of God to conceal the word.* Although Thou conceal these things in Thy heart, yet I know that Thou rememberest all things.† Christ says in Isaias, He hath made My mouth like a sharp sword: in the shadow of His hand He hath protected Me, and hath made Me as a chosen arrow: in His quiver He hath hidden Me.‡

* Prov. xxv. 2. † Job x. 13. ‡ Ibid, xlix. 2.

In a moment of indignation have I hid My face a little while from thee, but with everlasting kindness have I had mercy on thee.* Thou hast hid Thy face from us.† The dispensation of the mystery which hath been hidden from eternity in God.‡ The mystery of God the Father and of Christ Jesus, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge § Your life is hid with Christ in God.‖ All darkness is hid in His secret places.¶ I will give thee hidden treasures and the concealed riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I am the Lord that calleth thee by thy name. I have made a likeness of thee, and thou hast not known Me. I girded thee, and thou hast not known Me.** See now all the things which thou hast heard. I have shewn thee new things from that time, and things are kept which thou knowest not. They are created now, and not of old; and before the day, when thou heardest them not, lest thou shouldst say: Behold I knew them! Thou hast neither heard, nor known, neither was thy ear open of old. David so looks at God as if He were the hiding-place Himself of His vexed creatures, that he prays Him one while to hide him under the shadow of His wings, another while in His pavilion, and again in the secret of His tabernacle: and the hiding of God's face is spoken of as the customary punishment, the standing trouble, of His creatures. God's very presence is a presence so bright that it hides all that comes under the law of its light; His Face is itself a secret.†† Thus David in an extasy sings the following inspired words, O how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou

* Job liv. 8. † Ibid, lxiv. 7. ‡ Eph. iii. 9. § Col. ii. 2-3.
‖ Ibid, iii. 3. ¶ Job xx. 26. ** Isaias xlv. †† Ibid, xlviii.

hast hidden for them that fear Thee, which Thou hast wrought for them that hope in Thee, in the sight of the sons of men. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy Face, from the disturbance of men. Thou shalt protect them in Thy tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues. Blessed be the Lord, for He hath shown His wonderful mercy to me in a fortified city.* Verily thou art a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Saviour.† When He hideth His countenance, who is there that can behold Him, whether it regard nations or all men?‡ Again, He is described as the Lord that hideth His Face from the House of Jacob. Neither can all these passages be explained in the sense of a temporary punishment, neither when they refer to punishment are they the less illustrative of the principle under consideration.§ The kingdom of heaven itself is like unto a treasure hidden in a field, and when a man found it, he hid it.‖ Three times David calls God his hiding-place: and our Lord is spoken of by Isaias as the Man that shall be as when one is hid from the wind, and hideth himself from a storm, as rivers of water in drought, and the shadow of a rock that standeth out in a desert land.¶ And so Habacuc says, God will come from the south, and the Holy One from mount Pharan. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise. His brightness shall be as the light: there is His strength hid.** I have brought all these passages together to make you familiar with the way in which this figure of a hiding-place was continually present to the minds of the inspired writers. Sometimes it is God who is hiding Himself, and in light and brightness,

* Ps. xxx. 20. † Isaias xlv. 15. ‡ Job xxxiv. § Isaias viii.
‖ Matt. xiii. ¶ Ibid, xxxii. ** Ibid, iii.

and in His own presence. Sometimes it is man who desires to hide himself in God, as if there was ever an enviable darkness round about Him which the intrusive eye of creatures could not penetrate. Sometimes God hides Himself for awhile, and for a reason, and in the way of chastisement, and men cry out because of the pain of it. The visions and apparitions of God, such as those to Abraham, Moses, Eliphaz, and Elias, might be abundantly quoted in the same sense. But the following passage from the book of Job treats so fully the whole subject of seeking for God, that in spite of its length I will introduce it here.*

Now also my words are in bitterness, and the hand of my scourge is more grievous than my mourning.

Who will grant me that I might know and find Him, and come even to His throne?

I would set judgment before Him, and would fill my mouth with complaints, that I might know the words that He would answer me, and understand what He would say to me.

I would not that He should contend with me with much strength, nor overwhelm me with the weight of His greatness.

Let Him propose equity against me, and let my judgment come to victory.

But if I go to the east He appeareth not: if to the west, I shall not understand Him. If to the left hand what shall I do? I shall not take hold on Him: if I turn myself to the right hand I shall not see Him.

But He knoweth my way; and has tried me as gold that passeth through the fire.

* Matt. xxii.

My foot hath followed His steps, I have kept His way and have not declined from it. I have not departed from the commandments of His lips, and the words of His mouth I have hid in my bosom.

For He is alone, and no man can turn away His thought; and whatsoever His soul hath desired, that hath He done; and when He shall have fulfilled His will in me, many other like things are also at hand with Him.

And therefore I am troubled at His presence, and when I consider Him I am made pensive with fear.

God hath softened my heart, and the Almighty hath troubled me. For I have not perished because of the darkness that hangs over me, neither hath the mist covered my face.

Times are not hid from the Almighty: but they that know Him, know not His days.

It is then the good will and pleasure of God that He is so in His own creation that He will only be found out by those who seek Him. He will neither overwhelm their minds with the oppression of His majesty, nor constrain their wills by the visible pageant of His justice It is our greatest glory and highest privilege thus to seek after God. When we consider our own vileness, it is wonderful that we should be allowed to do so. We do not deserve to be permitted to do anything with God or for Him. Yet in His compassion He has made it our one sole duty, as it is our inestimable right. When we do not think of God, we seem to have many rights; and in truth we have; and they are all derived from Him, and rest immoveably on the basis of His fidelity. But in the thought of God, they all seem to die away, and to wither

as flax in the fire. We see that He is all in all, that there is no justice but His absolute will, which is the perfection of justice, that on His majesty we can have no claims but such as He first invents and then secures to us. The sense of our dignity, which in the practice of virtue it is so often needful for us to remember, passes away from us, as a star fades in the sunrise. Then, in such hours, it dawns upon us, like a new idea, how glorious a thing it is for us to be allowed to seek God, to find Him everywhere, to be ever lifting His veils, and looking into His beautiful sanctuaries, while He leads us with His fascinations, and encourages us by His rays of light, and fills our hearts with all manner of sudden sweetnesses, and melts us into prayers and tears. And yet how often we forget all this! We observe, and our observations are not hung on Him. We think, and He is not in all our thoughts. We reason, and our reasoning is not His. We read, but we are not broadening or deepening our knowledge of Him, "whom to know is life, and joy to make mention of His Name." Nay, we even separate what is intellectual from what is devotional, as if the mind and heart were as two scales, and one could not rise but the other must sink. Let it be in no such spirit as this that we now proceed to see how far God's manner of disclosing Himself in the various kingdoms of nature and of grace, of the Church and of the world, furnishes us with analogies to the Blessed Sacrament. As God wills that we should seek Him, let us show our love by being eager and diligent in the search, applying, if we may, to Him the words of Saul to Ziphites,* Blessed be ye of the Lord, for you have pitied my case. Go therefore I pray you, and use all

* i. Kings. xxiii.

diligence, and curiously enquire, and consider the place where His Foot is, and who hath seen Him there; for He thinketh of me, that I lie craftily in wait for Him. Consider and see all His lurking holes where He is hid, and return to me with the certainty of the thing, that I may go with you. And if He should ever go down in the earth to hide Himself, I will search Him out in all the thousands of Juda.

The most part of His works are hidden, says the Sage; but when by His help we discover Him, then we must remember the Sage's advice, Be not exalted; for the works of the Highest only are wonderful, and His works are glorious and secret and hidden;* and the whole world before Him is as the least grain of the balance, and as a drop of the morning dew that falleth down upon the earth.† And when we come to difficulties, the same inspired philosopher is at hand to instil into us true and wise and reverent dispositions, as when he considers the extermination of the Canaanites, he cries out, "O how good and sweet is Thy Spirit, O Lord, in all things! For who shall say to Thee, What hast Thou done? or who shall withstand thy judgment? or who shall come before Thee to be a revenger of wicked men? or who shall accuse Thee, if the nations perish which Thou hast made? For there is no other God but Thou, who hast care of all, that Thou shouldst show that Thou dost not give judgment unjustly. Neither shall king, nor tyrant in Thy sight enquire about them whom Thou hast destroyed. For so much then as Thou art just, Thou orderest all things justly: thinking it not agreeable to Thy power, to condemn him who deserveth not to be punished. For Thy

* Eccles. xi. † Ibid.

power is the beginning of justice: and because Thou art Lord of all, Thou makest Thyself gracious to all. For Thou showest Thy power, when men will not believe Thee to be absolute in power, and Thou convincest the boldness of them that know Thee not. But Thou, being master of power, judgest with tranquillity and with great favour disposest of us: for Thy power is at hand when Thou wilt."

SECTION IV.

THE MATERIAL WORLD.

MODERN science has divided and mapped out for us the whole of nature into various kingdoms and provinces, each representing a separate science, some formed on peculiar axioms of their own, and some on a principle of classification. These kingdoms are very unequally illuminated in the present state of discovery. Some appear to be well-nigh finished and complete sciences; others again almost like regions unexplored, with objects seen indistinctly, and as it were, in a bright haze. Yet all of these sciences are full of sacred philosophy, full of God. They raise the mind to Him, and often illustrate with peculiar force the teaching of strict and scientific theology. Rightly viewed, these various kingdoms of science represent to us the intellect of humanity, acknowledging at once the dignity and the difficulty of the search after God, and so dividing among its children separate tasks, distinct provinces, in which to limit their investigations and their discoveries; so that the one united toil of all human minds should be a magnificent and universal search for God. The physics of ancient times seemed

to follow a loftier method than those of recent days.* The ancients took the nature of things in themselves to argue from, and began, like Aristotle, by laying down principles which should be fundamental truths in the very nature of things. But this was too high a flight; and consequently, in comparison with the light of modern times, ancient physics may be regarded as a failure. The later method of minute experiment, of registered observations, and of patient induction, is more fit for man, and more appropriate to a search after God amid the concealments of the natural world; and hence has come its eminent success. No sight can be more grateful to a true theologian than to behold the giant strides of scientific discovery, and the bold methods of scientific research. He has nothing to fear for his faith; except an embarrassment arising from the very riches of its demonstration, which these discoveries are continually supplying. No-

* Cabanis however, in his Rapports du Physique et du Moral, maintains that Democritus invented and pursued the modern method. En un mot, il indiqua les expériences comme un nouveau moyen d'arriver à la vérité; et seul parmi les anciens, il pratiqua constamment cet art qui depuis a fait presque tous les succès et la gloire des modernes. *Memoire Premier, p.* 68, *Edit. de Peisse.* It has been well remarked by a recent writer that the old-schoolmen who argued "ab actu ad posse," in reality treated observations with more respect than modern science has often done, whose very device and motto is observation and experience. Speaking of indubitable facts in psychology, which go towards a demonstration of the supernatural, and of the way in which modern science ignores what will not fit in with its preconceived theories, and of science especially as manifested in Academies and Associations, he says that science took its stand on observation, and it is précisément à partir de ce moment que l'on a commencé à biffer tous les faits qui gênaient, et à jeter au feu les observations de tous les siècles. De Mirville. Les Esprits, p. 336, note.

thing can be more narrow, vulgar, or stupid, than the idea of an antithesis between science and religion. It is true that some of the sciences, in the earlier periods of their construction, turned the heads of those who drank at their fountains; and crude theories, incompatible with the dogmas of the faith, were the result. Yet these only changed at last to fresh and more striking proofs of the divine and unalterable truth of our holy faith. For further discovery, and a larger induction, led in every case to an abandonment of the irreligious theory. Meanwhile nothing shows the divinity of science more clearly than this, that it is so full of God and under such a necessity of reflecting His attributes and operations in all sorts of ways, that even theories constructed to hasten discovery, and which acted for a while as conditions of discovery, until discovery itself proved them at last to be untenable, still gave true illustrations of the power, the wisdom, and the beauty of God, and bore consistent and harmonious testimony as well to His goodness as to His existence. Thus if we range through the sciences one after another we shall find each of them disclosing to us different vestiges of God, while the analogies of the different sciences together reflect, as in a mirror, that prime magnificence of God, His ever-blessed Unity.

Geology, which is the history of nature, has been regarded as a science, the cultivation of which is especially dangerous to religious habits of mind. If it be so, it is the mind that is in fault and not the science. The whole series of controversies ending in the admission of the extreme modernness of the present surface of the globe and the novelty of man in creation, is nothing else but a

long chain of proofs of the Mosaic narrative.* If we follow the geologist, as he burrows through the successive beds which form the crust of the earth, and sees in different beds a new creation of organic life, partly copied from the one anterior, partly anticipating the one to follow, until at last the fossil remains tell of organic life but little removed from inorganic matter, and then we enter regions where clearly there never was organic life at all, but only brute matter; if we follow him thus from the alluvial deposits to the hard granite, what fields of religious thought are opened out to us! Kingdoms of animals when man their king was not yet created, millions and millions of years while earth was preparing for the human race, silent grim epochs of inorganic matter out of which God was gaining glory in unimaginable ways, awful and hideous catastrophes, a sort of calendar to measure some portion of the life of God before there was any life of man! Geology, while it overwhelms us with its gigantic periods of time, seems at the same time to send out a dim exploring light into the eternity that was before creation: and while it exhibits to us our own planet undergoing appalling vicissitudes for ages without a rational inhabitant upon it, it shows us that science cannot object, at least in the present state of knowledge, to our choosing to regard the other planets and the stars as still untenanted, if in our view it better suits our doctrines of the Incarnation and of the Headship of Christ, and, if we think so, the general structure of revelation. Not that theology needs to shrink from the blaze of any

* See Cuvier's Revolutions sur la Surface de la Terre. Both the conflicting theories of Catastrophe and Uniformity lead equally to this conclusion.

possible discoveries; only that theologians, like others, may use their liberty while they have it. Theology itself will be found to fit all discoveries as they come. It is only the individual theologians who may sometimes have to humour their own private ideas.*

What geology is to time astronomy is to space. Somehow it widens our idea of God, just as the sky at midnight sensibly swells and expands the mind of him who gazes on it. We may examine the movements and laws of the earth, as

> She from west her silent course advances
> With inoffensive pace, that spinning sleeps
> On her soft axle, while she paces even,
> And bears thee soft with the smooth air along.

Or we may study the theory of the moon, her inequalities and eccentricities. We may observe each separate planet, or take a view of the solar system altogether. We may rise to the fixed stars, the double stars, the clusters of stars, and the enormous tracts of spiral nebulous matter, forming if so be into new worlds, or come nearer home

* It is a mistake to suppose that the doctrine of the demiurgic days being indefinite periods, and not solar days, has been forced upon theology by modern discovery. St. Augustin mentions it in the 20th Book of the City of God, cap. II. Bossuet calls the days "six different progresses," in his 5th Elevation on the Mysteries. Nicolas, in his Etudes Philosophiques, liv. ii. c. II. also quotes S. Athanasius, Orat. Cont. Arian. n. 60, and Origen, De Princip. iv. 16, et cont. Celsum, vi. 50, 51, in the same sense. Indeed, as has been observed, the Sacred Text itself seems to require some such interpretation, when it it said, "These are the *generations* of the heaven and the earth, when they were created in the *day* that the Lord God made the heaven and the earth:" to say nothing of the division of day and night being made part of the fourth day's work.

to the zodiacal light, regarded, if the disciples of Laplace require it, as a new planet in the act of being thrown off from the sun. And everywhere we have God, everywhere we have instances and explications of those necessary truths which He, not experience, has planted in our minds; and nowhere a vestige of any law in the least inconsistent with the manifold definitions, scriptural deductions, or ecclesiastical dogmas of theology. There is nothing in Astronomy at present to hinder our forming a theory, which shall fall in most harmoniously with the ideas we gather for ourselves out of the Incarnation. Yet these ideas are not the doctrine of the Incarnation. They are not infallible truths; and the theory is but a theory, which can be abandoned without pain, and without a vestige of consequence to our theology, if ever the rigorous proofs of fresh discovery should dismantle it.

There is nothing to hinder us from believing, if we choose to believe it, that earth alone of all the planetary, solar, lunar, or sidereal bodies is inhabited by reasonable creatures—that the creation of material reasonable beings began with the planet of earth—that it is the garden of the solar system, which is itself the beautiful garden of all other or vaster systems—that it is just on the confines of solid and fluid so commingled as to subserve organic and specially human life — that it is specially beautiful because specially habitable — and that in God's works habitability is the eminence of beauty — that the other planetary and sidereal bodies are still in the azoic, or protozoic, or palæozoic, or neozoic stage — that analogy gives us no reasons for preferring a system of cosmogonical chronology which would require that the planets should be contemporaneously in the same stage — that

the force of any such or similar analogies is not greater than the theological inconveniences to the doctrine of the Incarnation, the unity of God's family of intellectual creatures, the headship of Christ, or the silence of the Scriptures—that if the actual position of our planet gives it no physical prerogatives, the fact that our Lord was incarnate in it and of the lineage of Adam gives it special prerogatives, higher than physical ones, even if the benefits of the Incarnation be extended to races of planetary beings, neither angelical nor human—that the intel lectual races of incorporeal angels are our only brothers — that, if so be, when the doom is come, the accounts of the human family made up and balanced, and its destinies wound up and concluded, this indestructible planet may be the theatre of other scenes, with its crust shrivelled off by the burning heat of which St. Peter speaks, and its new surface glorified; and certain obscure revelations to the saints do somewhat indicate the nature of its future — that God may then, if so be, move on to other planets or stars, and successively or synchronistically people them with families of intelligent creatures— that the benefits of the Incarnation will be in some way extended to them, whether they be fallen or keep their integrity, and that with the angels and ourselves they also will form but one family of God, under one human Head, Jesus Christ God and Man. This is a mere gratuitous theory, not pretending either to scientific or theological proof, but simply such an one as our theological instincts may incline us to form; and all I am saying is that there is nothing, I believe, in the present state of astronomical discovery which shall make it peremptory on us to repudiate it, just as the proof that

it was contrary to gravitation would make it peremptory on us to reject it, at least until the science of the twentieth or thirtieth century might have shown that gravitation was itself only one case of a much wider law, which might be polarity or anything else.*

So in mechanics the respective laws of force, motion, rest, and inertia are only so many revelations of Himself by God; and in these matters experience teaches us, much as it teaches, less than what is innate and fundamental in our minds; though the want of habits of close thought often prevent our evolving it. The same may be said of the laws of sound, light, and heat, which form the sciences of acoustics, optics, and the science which has to do with heat, latent or specific, and its conduction and radiation. If the undulatory theories of all the three, sound, light, and heat, be true, so that they are none of them things, but notions, the operations become still more beautiful, and remind us of the old angelic theory of the Schoolmen Speaking from no more knowledge than the popular manuals on the various subjects contain,

* Any one, who has followed the controversy about the Plurality of Worlds, must have been struck with this thought, — How many puzzles and perplexities would have been saved to these writers, if they had been acquainted with the Tractatus de Deo of Catholic theology! Places may be pointed out in the Essay on the Plurality of Worlds, in Sir D. Brewster, in Mr. Montague Lyon Phillips, and in Dr. Lardner's Museum, where a knowledge of the Christian doctrine of God would have been a welcome auxiliary to the authors. So true is that experience of converts to the Catholic faith that the change wrought in their minds by their conversion is not so much in the belief of new doctrines, such as Transubstantiation, Purgatory, and the Devotion to Mary, but in new knowledge of the Divine Perfections, and a more comprehensive as well as more intimate view of God.

it would seem when we come to the study of chemical affinities, the doctrine of imponderable fluids, the theory of atoms and the objections to it, or modifications of it, especially the theory of Boscovitch, which makes matter consist not of solid particles but of mathematical centres of force,—it would seem as if we were getting down into the primeval caves and laboratories of creation, and might expect any moment to come upon God at work, so near to first things, to the limits of the void, do these considerations appear to bring us. I confess to have almost trembled, half with eagerness and half with fear, in reading of these things, and wondering what the hand of man would touch, and feel, and get hold of next. The presence of God grows then like the thrill that comes from the nearness of one we love. To a religious mind physical science is an intensely religious thing.

Even the likenesses and differences of botany teach us God, the planter of the first garden, as the Bible calls Him. Simple classifications, such as those of mineralogy, are full of Him. The beauties of form in crystals and in plants, which has now made a science of its own, and which every one has at least been superficially struck with in the loveliness of the foliage of trees, is a reflection of the infinite beauty of God. Is it not like a flash of light to us, when we read of crystals, that the same chemical compound always assumes the same geometrical form, and again, that the geometrical symmetry of a crystal corresponds both in degree and kind to the symmetry of its optical properties? Number and music are depths I dare not explore, but surely what the most popular writers say of them shows how they represent the mysterious harmony of God. Numbers are of themselves so fascinating,

that there has hardly been an age in which they have not run away with men, and drawn them up into the impenetrable cloud-land of mysticism; and music, I suppose, is a kind of arithmetic, which seems to lay almost a fearful hold on those to whom it speaks intelligibly and tells its secrets. To the unmusical a musical man is a study, a phenomenon, another sort of creature, and a superior creature. Physiology is an unfixed science, but its uncertainties, such as function and organization, perception and sensation, and at last thought and will, which belong at once to anatomy and to metaphysics, all exhibit God in the tenderness of numberless adaptations and the unattainable perfection of mechanical skill. This science is the home of the doctrine of final causes, which, as every one knows, is a theology of itself. Yet, though our theological bias may lead some of us this way, nevertheless, if proof were given, a theologian could easily take up and assimilate St. Hilaire's seemingly indevout Theory of Analogues, which holds that the structures and functions of animals must be judged of by analogy, not by fitness or adaptation, that we are not to ascribe to God any intention, and that final causes are no guides in natural philosophy. Of course we should interpret that remark of not ascribing to God any intention, as meaning no intention that we are able to indicate, not as if there was no intention in the Divine Mind. There is no reason why a theologian passionately fond of theology should not hold, as some have held, that final causes spoil philosophy and are the marplot of the physical sciences. As a matter of fact his instincts may inclime him the other way; but there is nothing in his theolgy to compel him. What seem the shortest roads to the manifestation of God are not always the most theological: and the doc-

trine of final causes has no special or exclusive right to that honourable epithet.*

Johnson said of Goldsmith's History of Animated Nature, that he could make it as charming as a fairy tale; so in our way of estimating things, we should say of Cuvier's Animal Kingdom, that it was as fascinating as a section of St. Thomas, and equally full of attractions to God and disclosures of Him. Comparative anatomy, as applied to fossils, the changes of the earth's floor from outer fire or from central heat, from the furrowing pressure of water, the destructive and reproductive action of rivers, the gigantic sledges of glaciers, and changes of climate dependent on astronomical laws, the creation, transmutation, and extinction of species, — all these are more or less provinces of geology, which give rise to many

* Bacon says that final causes so far from being useful in the sciences corrupt them, except in what concerns the actions of men. *Novum Organon. l.* 2, *aph.* 2; and again, *De Augmentis Scientiarum, lib.* 3, *cap.* 5, he says, The research of final causes is barren, and like a virgin consecrated to God, bears no fruit. Descartes, while acknowledging the existence of final causes, seems to maintain that they are inaccessible to us. *Principes de la Philosophie*, iii. 2–3. Leibnitz asserts that final causes will not help us to the demonstration of a law in the science of nature, even while he says that everything in physics must be deduced from final causes. *Lettre a M. Bayle.* Geoffroy St. Hilaire says, The doctrine of final causes, at least in the way in which it has been handled for centuries, has had its day in zoology. Those who adopt these doctrines find their greatest difficulty in physiology, where our knowledge of efficient causes is so very limited. It is intelligible that to those who are not children of an infallible church, physical science detached from the doctrine of final causes should appear simply terrible, as leading them they know not where, and unfastening all notions of religion. In this, as in the other domains of intellectual research, Catholics may be more fearless and more free.

interesting and improving theological speculations; while in the hot controversy between the opposing geological doctrines of Catastrophe and Uniformity, both are equally interesting and equally acceptable to theology, though our bias may possibly lean rather to the former theory than to the latter, even while the balance of proof may incline towards the doctrine of Uniformity. Again, when we come to such sciences as ethnology and glossology, we seem to see God acting as the trainer and novice-master of His own Human family.* But nowhere is God more manifest, nothing in science perhaps is more religious, than the comparison of the two doctrines of gravitation and polarity. In gravitation we see nature, at once keeping herself in motion and at the same time tending to repose. It is as if the huge ribs and beams and framework of Omnipotence were being laid bare before us. It is as though we saw it new, tremulous, and vibrating with the last touch of the Creative Hand hardly yet lifted off from it. While polarity, that mysterious secret, teaching that like repels like, and unlike attracts unlike, represents to us "opposite elements rushing together, opposite motions reducing each other to rest," God's huge creation labouring in every particle, like a vessel at sea, finding concord in discord, reaching unity by opposition, and so, mighty complex onward universe! entering into her rest.

But in the midst of all these sciences we behold a threefold manifestation for God. Inorganic matter and animal life are full of beautiful fitnesses, giving out mute laws which science expresses, as if they were strophes of

* See De Bonald on the origin of language in his Legislation Primitive.

a hymn to God. Another while we see and gaze in reverent silence, on the countless adaptations, which science is daily laying bare in all her kingdoms, to man and his regal state and dominion, as lord of the creation and the younger brother of the Incarnate Word. Then, further on, we see inexplicable things, which seem as though God's own private glory were their only end, the marvels of unscaled mountain-tops, the never to be unveiled crystals of the lower earth, the forms and lives and colours of the profound sea-caves, and other things which are in the physical world what the sufferings of children and the fires that purge forgiven sin are in the moral world, fountains of Divine Glory, at which we can only kneel and worship. But in the midst of the camp where all these sciences have pitched their tents, there is one Ark, one veiled sanctuary, around which the minds of men have watched, patiently as the Chaldean astronomer of old, these many centuries. Many a contrivance for raising the heavy curtains that are round about it has been invented. Many a fair guess and swift conjecture as to what would then be seen has come from the prolific wit of men. Yet so far there has been a charmed circle round it which science has not overpassed. It is the secret of being alive, the Sanctuary of Life. Will science ever make it known? Or is it a hiding-place too near Himself, that God should allow us to break into its august recess?*

* The modern investigations into the principle of life touch, as might be expected, on many interesting theological questions; but none seem either to countenance the old error of two souls, or to impugn the words of the Council of Trent, Anima rationalis est forma corporis. But modern physiology, with its "doublure psychique,"

After this brief excursion into the physical sciences, let us return to our anchor, which is the thought of God's absolute dominion over us all. On this we are in the open sea as safe as if we were in harbour, and can ride out any storm. In all studies of this nature it is not so much God's wisdom and goodness and power, which we ought jealously to keep before us, as His Dominion. It is often a cheap homage to acknowledge His omnipotence; the true worship is to confess His Sovereignty.

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often curiously illustrates the marvels in the lives of the saints. For instance, the following passage of the Abbé Hanapier throws light on the bilocation of the saints, that is, their being in two places at once. "Il faut reconnaître avec le docteur Richerand que le fluide vital, ou si l'on aime mieux, le principe de la vie, anime, c'est-à-dire, vivifie chaque molécule vivante de notre corps, chaque organe, chaque système d'organes. D'après cette vérité incontestable, on peut dire que nous avons deux corps: un, composé de matière brute, et un autre composé de fluide vital, qui vivifie, qui organise celui composé de matière brute. Ce corps, composé de fluide vital, se comporte, dit le docteur Richerand, à la manière d'un fluide." Hence, says he, those acute pains, felt by persons who have undergone amputation, in the very limbs of which the amputation has deprived them.

We may compare these views with those put forward by Görres in his Christliche Mystik, in the third chapter of the sixth book, entitled Der physische Grund aller dämonischen Mystik sub-division B of letter D. Gegenseitige Bezüge der Menschen zueinander. In one place he says, Der Leib ist also eine aus zweien Leiblichkeiten im Bande der dritten zusammengehaltene Doppelnatur; deren eine Obere dem gesammten Nervensysteme einwohnend, im Nervengeiste wirkt; die andere Untere mehr aus dem Blute geboren, im Umlaufsysteme sich ausprägt; während das Beide einende Band in den Muskelsystemen hervortritt. And again (the interest of the subject must excuse the length of the quotation), he says: Zwischen beiden Extremen liegen aber nun Mittelzustände zwischen inne, in denen das Band sich lockert, ohne zu zerreissen, und in Gefologe der loseren Bindung nun die beiden Naturen voneinanderlassend in Ec-

Viva, in his treatise on Beatitude,* has a passage on this subject which deserves to be written in letters of gold. He is striving to arrive at some theological principles by calculating the consequences of the famous hypothesis of Durandus, viz., the possibility of an essentially indestructible creature independently of any decree of God; and in answer to those who object that unless we grant the hypothesis, we limit God's power, he replies: "In

centricität auseinanderweichen. Geschieht diese Lösung aber also, dass die höhere vorbildliche durch Uberkräftigung sich ablöst von der unteren abbildlichen; und der Latenz sich entringend, in der sie von ihr gehalten wird, über die selbe hinausteigt, ohne jedoch ganz von ihr abzulassen; dann wird, wie das Wetterleuchten aus der sich külenden Wolke, so das Spectrum aus der Umhülle frei, und in der Aufzuckung sichtbar. Also befreit, wird es aber, weil mit dem Gezweiten weniger verwickelt, in seiner Einheit gehöht, und somit also in all seinem Wirken mehr centrit. Centrirt aber, wie es nun ist, wird es dadurch zwar nicht allgegenwärtig, was nur Gott zukömmt, aber doch nach Maasgabe seiner Befreiung vielgegenwärtig; im zugemessenen Kreise seiner Herschafft verschwindet der Raum, und es kann also im ganzen Umfange desselben überall zugegen seyn, wohin es sein Verlangen fixirt. Wie es also in dem Theile, der noch mit der greiflichen Umhülle verwickelt ist, in ihr zugegen zu seyn fortfährt; so ist es mit dem anderer mehr centrirten anderwährts, und wird dort sichtbar in den Kräften und den Stoffen, die ihm zu Gebote stehen. Est ist den eine Art von Nebensonne, die sich neben der wahren bildet; aber nicht durch Brechung in einem fremden medium hervorgerufen, sondern durch ein Sichselbstentrücktseyn der Persönlichkeit bei beharrlichem Bleiben in sich selbst erwirkt; so jedoch, dass die wahre Sonne im Spectrum gegeben ist, die Nebensonne aber in jenen Theil der Persönlichkeit fällt, wo das Höhere noch ins Tiefere verwickelt, es mit getrübten Lichte durchbricht. I am quite unable to pass any judgment on Görres' theory: to do so with any fairness, it would be necessary, first of all, to know anatomy, and to be able to compare his system with those most approved at present in the French and other schools.

* Pars ii. Disp. I. Quæstio ix.

all doubts, then, whether creatures are possible which God cannot use for what uses He thinks fit, as a stone for thinking, we should incline to that side which seems most to favour the dominion of God over His creatures, rather than to that which magnifies His power, and not be anxious, at any expense, to enlarge the sphere of omnipotence. For, according to sane philosophy and theology the Divine Sovereignty is rather to be extended, for it is an attribute, by its very conception, more excellent than omnipotence." This canon of theologizing is of very wide application; and will often lead to much higher views of God than a man could attain by following the other lead. It is one of those pregnant germs of thought which have almost power of themselves to form a mind, and to expand themselves into a whole education.

Nothing can be plainer then than that these sciences are full to overflowing of God and of Divine Disclosures. Yet it is, I fear, plain also, that simply as an historical fact, they have not for the most part led to religious habits of mind or hearty submission to the will of God, even so far as they themselves make known His will. What is the cause of this? That they have been divorced from theology. And why has this divorce led to such results? Because, which is what I have all along been aiming at, all manifestations of God, like the Blessed Sacrament, are concealments also. Everywhere God is veiled; everywhere He works underground: everywhere He sets up a screen between Himself and the observation of His creature; everywhere search is the law of earth and vision the law of heaven: everywhere in this world to believe is to see, and seeing is not believing. This is God's way.

It pictures a divine Idea; and it is also, not best only for us, but simply necessary.

A comparison of the different views of nature will bring this home to us more plainly. Catholic tradition teaches us that the material creation is ruled and administered by the spiritual substances we call angels. St. Justin, Athenagoras, Theodoret, Clement of Alexandria, St. Gregory Nazianzen, Origen, Eusebius of Cesarea, St. Jerome. St. Austin, St. Hilary, St. Ambrose, St. Chrysostom, St. Cyril, St. Gregory, and St. John Damascene, unite in witnessing to this; and they are followed by later theologians. It would probably therefore be not less than temerarious to call in question this old tradition. But nothing is fixed as to the manner or extent of this angelic administration. A view, however, once prevailed in the Church, taught by many doctors and sanctioned by the saints, which went so far as this:—that, as some in later days have taught that there is no such thing as real contact, but that all particles of matter exist in a subtle etherial fluid, or something of the nature of a fluid, so all the material universe is permeated by a subtle stream of immaterial, intellectual, personal angelic life, ruling, moving, managing, administering material laws to all things, so that God Himself is as it were hidden under this many-coloured veil of angelical operations. St. Thomas went so far as to teach that these angels were the fountains of all motion, or at least he represented them as fulfilling the functions of the vortices of Descartes, and he argued against Aristotle, which is singular, as showing he was following some authority he thought stronger. Moreover, he infers, in his method of theologizing, that all these angels are of the single choir called in the Scriptures the Virtues.

This view kept its empire for long over the minds of men, and with greater or less modification it appears in the later schools of theology, as it still undoubtedly lives in the popular belief. It is to this that Milton alludes in the tenth book of Paradise Lost.

> Such was their song:
> While the Creator, calling forth by name
> His mighty angels gave them several charge,
> As sorted best with present things. The sun
> Had first his precept so to move, to shine,
> As might affect the earth with cold and heat
> Scarce tolerable, and from the north to call
> Decrepit winter; from the south to bring
> Solstitial summer's heat. To the blanc moon
> Her office *they* prescribed; to the other five
> Their planetary motions, and aspects,
> In sextile, square, and trine, and opposite,
> Of noxious efficacy, and when to join
> In synod unbenign; and taught the fixed
> Their influence malignant when to shower,
> Which of them rising with the sun, or falling,
> Should prove tempestuous. To the winds *they* set
> Their corners, when with bluster to confound
> Sea, air, and shore; the thunder when to roll
> With terror through the dark aerial hall.
> Some say, He bid *His angels* turn askance
> The poles of earth, twice ten degrees and more,
> From the sun's axle; *they* with labour pushed
> Oblique the centric globe.

Now, barring the idea of all motion proceeding from the angels, which according to modern lights is at least a superfluous machinery, it does not seem that science can detect either the truth or the falsehood of this angelic theory, and there may be analogies and scriptural premises which may induce the theologian to accept it and

habitually to regard nature from this point of view.* But I am not concerned with the truth or falsehood of the

* De Maistre says somewhere, We shall soon laugh at those who awhile ago were laughing at the darkness of the Middle Ages. M. Calmiel, physician at the madhouse at Charenton, has written a book on the religious epidemics which have prevailed especially in Catholic monasteries, and the object of the book, which is not *intentionally* wicked, is to account for them all on the theory of hallucination and madness. He says that if we read all the theological books from the time of St. Louis to the time of Louis XIV. we shall be surprised to find the part assigned by theology and transcendental philosophy to supernatural beings. "This manner of interpreting the operations of nature evidently destroys, root and branch, the actual theory of the present day. Theologians could not help themselves. They threw themselves, à corps perdu, into the metaphysics of supernatural causes. They were tied by the very text of Scriptures; and besides, the number of particular facts which seemed to demonstrate or confirm the existence of these spiritual essences is almost frightening to the imagination." Yet mark his conclusion! "Il faut donc bien l'avouer, au risque d'encourir le reproche de vouloir tirer la logique des théologiens du discrédit où elle est aujourdhui si justement tombée. Quand une fois on à admis sérieusement (what is of faith to a Catholic) l'existence d'un grand nombre d'êtres spirituels, tout cet echafaudage de superstitions n'est pourtant pas aussi absurde qu'on est d'abord porté à se le figurer. A ce compte il semblerait, que le plus grand tort des théologiens etait d'avoir outrê les consequences de la doctrine, ... et finalement on est bien forcé de confesser que cette theorie ne pouvait paraître que seduisante à des spiritualités renforcés." (De la Folie, in various places.) In one place he quotes a remarkable passage of the sceptical Bayle on the same subject. It is in his article on Photinus. Je ne sais ce qui arrivera, mais il me semble que, *tot ou tard*, on sera *contraint* d'abandonner les principes mécaniques, si on ne leur associe les volentés de quelques intelligences, et franchement il n'y a pas d'hypothèse plus capable de donner raison des événements que celle qui admet une telle association. Cuvier speaking of certain fluids, says, We cannot yet decide whether these agents are really material; and M. de Lourdoueix (De la Vérité, p. 350,) says, Nous croyons, nous que la matière etant inerte de sa nature, ses agents sont vraiment spirituels

theory. I wish to compare the habit of mind it forms with the habit of mind formed and disciplined on other methods of contemplating nature. God is hidden beneath this veil of angels, it is true; they make a screen of wings around Him, as His seraphic train closed round His throne when Isaias saw Him in the temple "in the year that King Ozias died." But the screen is spiritual, living, personal, and leads at once to God. The angels are an object of holy fear because of their own great power and dazzling magnificence; and they are an object of holy love, even of fraternal love, because of their administrative office towards ourselves, and because they are fellow servants with us under one Human Head. This method, therefore, of looking upon natural operations was essentially religious, even supposing it were not true; though of course if it were not true, it was undesirable, as no error can be desirable, however seemingly delectable its immediate fruits.

But nations, who had lost or who at least had hopelessly adulterated the primitive tradition, looked at nature in a different way from this. They watched its operations and saw that they were in themselves beautiful exceedingly. The poetry of the storm took them as in a snare. The tranquillity of the mountains and the woods exhibited the hidden forces of mighty nature in almost adorable repose. The dome of starry sky above their pastoral plains was as the handwriting of divinity, bidding them decipher in the mazy movements of the luminous orbs the secrets, not only of space and number, of

et emanent du principe de forceet de mouvement, diversement modifié par le Verbe. From this, back again to the old-fashioned angelical theory how brief and easy the transition!

force and motion, but also of destiny and of futurity. How could that be a unity which was so multiform? What need of other gods than those energetic powers whose operations they beheld? Hence the first product of nature's beauty thus standing between God and man was idolatry. Nothing can be added to what the author of the Book of Wisdom says: "But all men are vain, in whom there is not the knowledge of God, and who by these good things that are seen, could not understand Him that is, neither, by attending to the works, have acknowledged who was the workman; but have imagined either the fire, or the wind, or the swift air, or the circle of the stars, or the great water, or the sun and moon, to be the gods that rule the world. With whose beauty if they being delighted took them to be gods, let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they: for the First Author of beauty made all those things. Or if they admired their power and their effects, let them understand by them, that He that made them is mightier than they. For by the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby. *But yet as to these they are less to be blamed. For they perhaps err, seeking God, and desirous to find Him.* For being conversant among His works they search; and they are persuaded that the things are good which are seen. But then again they are not to be pardoned. For if they were able to know so much, as to make a judgment of the world: how did they not more easily find the Lord thereof? But Thou, our God, art gracious and true, patient, and ordering all things in mercy. For if we sin, we are Thine, knowing Thy greatness: and if we sin not, we know that

we are counted with Thee. For to know Thee is perfect justice; and to know Thy justice, and Thy power, is the root of immortality." * Thus it was because God's operations were His hiding-places, that men mistook them for Himself, and worshipped them; and yet because they made a "search" for Him, the inspired writer hesitates for a moment before he pronounces them unpardonable. Alas! we have not far to go to find some scientific treatises whose spirit is far less respectable even than that of the old idolatry!

When the spirit of belief had begun to pass away from men outside the Church, their minds were in a very different condition from those of the primitive nations. It seemed as if till the fulness of time arrived, and our Lord had come, that there was some vital heat and energy supernaturally kept alive in the old but now distorted traditions, which had once been the chief inheritance of humanity. Just as all expectations, the world over, ceased they knew not why when Jesus had come, so all religiousness that was from any other source than His Cross died out of the heart of nations, and perished by degrees. Then it was that men who missed God did not fall into superstition, but into another kind of credulity, which is far more abject and more irreligious, and which substitutes belief in self for belief in Him. Thus, men whose intellects were not thoroughly informed with Christian doctrines gave themselves up to the passionate pursuit of the physical sciences. Investigation was its own reward: induction a life-long happiness: experiment a fascination: discovery a sort of beatific vision upon earth.

* Cap. xiii.

Then, according to their bent of mind one of two things happened. In the one case second causes so dazzled them that they could not bear the steadfast act of vision required to contemplate the First Cause. Laws deceived them, as external operations deceived the old nations. God's own laws hid God. They were His hiding-place. It required a further search, and not of experiment but of faith, to find Him in His laws. Besides, law and order, succession and continuity, secular deflections of heavenly bodies and secular self-recoveries from such deflections, — all these things had a tendency to fix and rivet the mind upon themselves. Men began with a pious habit of finding out adaptations to human comforts everywhere; and so insensibly they became possessed with low and inadequate notions of God. When they came to phenomena which were inexplicable on that hypothesis, they could not conceive of God acting out of a pure love of law and order, and simply for His own glory; and they also came by degrees to forget that their intellects were not adequate measures even of their own discoveries, and that things done did not always, perhaps never altogether, disclose God's intentions in doing them. Hence even the doctrine of final causes was often handled irreverently: and is often now used with a sentimentality which is very far from worship or religion. But there was a step lower to which they could still descend. They could not only come to ignore God by throwing Him into the shade by His own laws; they could not only make His physical laws an antagonist power to His revealed will; but they could cast about in the most reckless and unscientific manner to get the most ungodly, the undivinest theories they could, in order to secure

themselves still more from the reach of religion. That a new view was more peremptory against religion than the old one was of itself its recommendation. The logic of a corrupt heart supplied the place of philosophic method. Science herself makes a mock of many of them now for this very thing. Men were amazed at Voltaire's views of the Chinese, and the marvellously exaggerated eulogies with which he put them before the admiring eyes of Europe. They did not see of what immense value to him was a picture of patriarchal virtues and chaste simplicity and noble duty altogether destitute of Christian light and grace. And can the civilized intelligence of modern times fall below Voltaire? At this day the Hegelians of Berlin and Paris, with their identity of Being and Non-Being, scout Voltaire as no better than a "semi-Catholic." Here is a metre by which we can measure much. But then, so it was of old, when the Eternal Wisdom of the Father came down from heaven, and let men gaze on Him and listen to Him; they took a long deliberate look into His Face, and said that He was beside Himself, and mad, and had a devil.

This was one way in which men were affected. But there were others who had so much of the religious or rather the poetic element in their minds, that they could not altogether rest in this sterile worship of laws and forces and secondary causes. There was not enough of intellectual ceremonial about it to suit their genius. They yearned to have God more near. They would have been mystics, if they had been Christians. Their sense of the vague and the mysterious needed satisfaction Worship recommended itself to them artistically; and they wished, æsthetically, that everything could be divine

But at all costs the grasp of moral obligation was to be taken off them. Their worship was to be one of epicurean pleasure; and its smoothness would be marred if they were to put bit and bridle on the passions that thirsted for their ends. So God *was* near, was everywhere. He was closely by. We touched Him. We were ever walking in a most awful sanctuary. For God was melted down and commingled with nature. Everything was God. We were a part of God ourselves. We were absorbed in Him; and as He was infinitely pure, so we, being part of Him, could in nowise be defiled. Hence, the very presence of God was the security of sin, not its terror and prevention as with the Christian doctrine of His omnipresence. This theory took with young men It harmonized with lofty aspirations, without descending to undignified restraints. It was presentable in a literary point of view, and could be conveniently taught exoterically or esoterically, as suited its professors. And in a word, of all the forms of atheism, this positive pantheism was by far the most graceful, the most bewitching, the most persuasive, the least offending that could be; if for no other reason at least for this, that it got rid, once and for all, of the vulgarizing doctrine of sin. Thus did it insinuate itself into countless minds, by the help of an evil and narrow study of physical science, uncrowning God and deifying nature, until now one of the most popular writers of the day, having set forth the Beatific Vision, as little, self-seeking, and unworthy, cries, How much more consoling the thought of being solemnly reabsorbed into the bosom of Universal Things!

It was in this very point of view that Fénelon regarded the laws of creation, as so many hiding-places of God.

His words were quoted when we were speaking of Transubstantiation as the greatest work of God. Thus, in like manner, we find occasional theological expressions of physical science, as we may call them. It is the first law of motion that when a body moves, not acted upon by any force, it will go on perpetually in a straight line, and with a uniform velocity. Descartes was said to be the first philosopher who put it clearly before the world: and in casting about to find the laws of motion, he seems rather to have used his theology than his mechanics; for he discovers "the law in the immutability and simplicity of the operation by which God preserves motion in matter. For He only preserves it precisely as it is in that moment in which He preserves it, taking no account of that which may have been previously." Nothing can illustrate more beautifully the sensible immediateness of God to the mind of Descartes than this very reasoning: though an English philosopher very fairly complains of it as wanting in mechanical proof. So also the principle of least action was a theological expression of science Maupertius proved by à priori theological arguments,* that all mechanical changes must take place in the world so as to occasion the least possible quantity of action. Mathematicians were irritated by his theology, but confessed that mechanical proofs actually established his principle.† So also many writers in England, transfer-

* Whewell, Hist. of Inductive Sciences, ii. 121.

† It seems strange to give Maupertius credit for a theological turn. Nevertheless, in his latter years he was converted, lived religiously, underwent great raillery with much courage, and published a work to show that the "religion of Jesus Christ is the true happiness of man." I do not know the exact date of his conversion: but the Mémoire sur la moindre Quantité d'Action was read at the

ring to their pages the theories of others, especially of German and French philosphers, have almost unconsciously, out of what they thought to be a stronger Christian sense, given a theological colouring to them, which they certainly do not possess in the originals: and which real theology by no means requires.

Now, what do the foregoing remarks amount to but this, that what between the two laws, of God's perfection and of our imperfections, so it is, that all God's revelations of Himself are, in truth, concealments also? He is not visible, except He vouchsafes to stand back out of the light and put Himself in the shade. Thus, nature is in its measure a manifestation of Himself analogous to the Blessed Sacrament. Its laws are as the sacramental accidents: they hide Him. He is nowhere in nature in His true dimensions; the littleness of nature is as the littleness of the Host. No one is obliged to see Him who will not see Him. No one can see Him at all without a moral preparation of heart. The very difficulties of nature are used as weapons against God, just as the difficulties of the Blessed Sacrament are the grounds on which many reject the doctrine. There is the same liability to be mistaken in both, and the same apparent contradiction to the evidence of the senses, which we so often meet with in the truths of physical science, such as that the earth goes round the sun when we see the sun go round the earth, or as when we are told that the earth

Academy of Sciences in 1744, and the author died at Bâsle in 1759. He maintained that his principle was a philosophical deduction from the doctrine of final causes. If, as I suspect, his Mémoire was previous to his conversion, some may see in the attachment to the doctrine of final causes a symptom of a naturally religious mind which the friendship of Voltaire may have debauched.

is spinning round in every point of its surface with incredible velocity from west to east, and yet a ball dropped from a lofty tower, falls just at the foot of it, instead of being left behind or out-stripped by it. It seems contrary to our senses that the stone should have the earth's circular motion impressed upon it, as well as the downward motion to which the law of gravity compels it. The eccentricities and inequalities of planetary bodies answer to the phenomena which men deem imperfect and unworthy of God in the Blessed Sacrament. Meanwhile, they have treated nature in the same way as they have treated the Blessed Sacrament. The heresy which denies sacramental grace and affirms the consecrating principle to be in ourselves, is like to the error of those who rest in laws and secondary causes and in the conceptions of their own minds. The heresies which teach Consubstantiation, or the Impanation of our Lord,* are analogous to pantheism, as we have recently described it: while those who profess to hold a Real Presence, and yet deny Transubstantiation, are in the condition of those who, from a scientific observation of nature, draw equally proofs in favour of a pure theism, and against the Christian revelation. Surely there is a marvellous parallel between God concealed under the laws and forces of nature, and God concealed under the veils and accidents of the Blessed Sacrament.

* Luther taught the first, Osiander the second.

SECTION V.

GOD'S WAYS WITH MINDS AND WILLS.

If we turn from the material to the mental world, we shall find God manifesting Himself in the same hidden way. It is upon the faculties of the mind that the Divine image and likeness is especially impressed. Yet the operations of those faculties, which seem to the pupils of Christian metaphysics so plainly to testify of God, could find their places with no little apparent show of reason in the systems of Locke and Hume, of the French Condillac and of the German Hegel. God's evidence of Himself in the mind of man is not so peremptory, but that moral perversity may deceive itself on the subject. To go more into detail on this subject would involve us in a host of controverted questions, which it is not desirable to open, and the consideration of which would be out of place here. The doctrines of the various metaphysical schools not only furnish us with abundant illustrations of the peculiarity of God's manifestations of Himself; but if we add to them the influence of grace upon the use of our understanding, the analogies will be still more striking. Both habitual and actual grace influence our mental faculties in many mysterious ways, just as the practice of moral virtue does; yet it is very difficult to detect either the kind or degree of influence which they exercise. The effect of the gratuitous gifts of grace, as they are called in theology, is still more hidden. The "word of wisdom" which the apostle speaks of to the Corinthians is defined in the schools to be a supernatural gift of inferring from the principles

of faith conclusions respecting divine things; and the "word of science" is a similar gift respecting human things: while the gratuitous gift of faith, as distinguished from the theological habit and virtue of faith, is a supernatural facility and lucidness in expounding the mysteries of the faith to others, and in our own minds an intelligent and unerring facility to assent to revealed mysteries. Now, when we hear a man preach, or when we read a spiritual book, who can detect the presence of this hidden co-operation of God with the natural abilities of His creature? Very often its presence is not even suspected by the preacher or the author himself; and this may arise just as much from the greatness of his humility as from the want of it. For while pride would lead him to imagine that his success was owing wholly to his natural abilities, lowliness would make him slow to believe that God had visited him with any supernatural gift. And what adds to the concealment is that these gratuitous gifts, even when they come to miracles, are no certain index of real sanctity in the person on whom God confers them for the sake of others. Thus, in metaphysics, as well as in physics, God reveals Himself to us by putting Himself into the shade.

The moral world presents us with similar phenomena. Conscience is as it were the oracle of God within us. It is His judgment-seat set up already in our hearts, and giving sentence upon our actions. A voice from heaven could not more forcibly convince us of the existence of God than the whisper that will scarcely be silenced within us. Yet, oracle as it is, it is not easy in many cases to know what is the will of God. Men seem to have a fearful power over their own consciences, both as nations

and as individuals. Public opinion, which is almost invariably corrupted and ungodly, forms consciences on its own principles and on a grand scale. Thus the Chinese deduce all morality from filial piety, and not from the love of God; and hence, with certain apparent good, comes a system of national morality the most grossly terrestrial that can be conceived. Others, on the contrary, like the people in Herodotus, used to put their fathers to death when the burden of age became distressing to them. Some nations considered it a moral excellence, indeed an imperative duty, to marry their mothers when they were left widows; and nations can be conceived, in the full light of Christian philosophy and civilization, with almost a worship for conventional honour, and a most frightful heedlessness of many grievous sins, such as unchastity. Thus conscience, which is God's witness, may be made to tell against Him in the bosoms of a whole people. In like manner, with individuals, evil habits and long perversity exercise a tyrannical power over the divine revelations of conscience, until it becomes, as Scripture calls it, seared. Nay, the repetition of supernatural acts may produce a natural habit, which seems identical with the supernatural, and yet in truth is without grace or merit, so that we may depart from the love of God and hardly know it.* But even with good persons the revelations of conscience are both limited and uncertain. The whole of casuistry is occupied, not so much with what it is better, more perfect, more acceptable to God for a man to do, but with what it is lawful for him to do, what he may probably do without offend-

* St. Francis of Sales, Amour de Dieu, liv. iv. 3. 9.

ing God; and what is the domain of casuistry, that most needful of human sciences, but a land in which moral duty lies in overclouded light and shade? Scruples bear witness to the same characteristics of conscience.

But in nothing is God's disclosure of Himself in the moral world more remarkably illustrated than in the origin and existence of evil. It seems as if evil shrouded His very Being and Attributes with a black impenetrable veil. It suggests at the very least an antagonism to His will, and that a successful one; so far as sight can tell, it would appear a rivalry on more than equal terms. How disproportioned to what we actually see in the world around us are God's lofty and exclusive claims as put forward in His revealed Word! Yet what are the chief, the most wonderful and the most touching manifestations of God, but those which He has made in consequence of this very permitted existence of evil? The beautiful ingenuities of Divine Love by which He has enabled us to repair the fall, the abundance of sin conquered by the superabundance of grace, the manifold interferences of the justice and the mercy, the wisdom and the power of God which are involved in the whole scheme of redemption,—these are in one sense the results of the existence of evil, and yet they are the very things by which we know God best, and for which we love Him most. What hides Him most utterly from those who will not see Him reveals Him most distinctly and most luminously to those whose hearts are seeking Him. The whole doctrine of sin is at once a concealment and a revelation of the relations between God and man. Look at the multitudinous outflow of human actions, prolific and continuous, over the whole earth; and how few suspect that to the

individual no action is indifferent, and that all these millions of them are momentarily assuming a peculiar and a durable character, according as they have been invisibly referred to God or not, that men's actions are tying and untying themselves to and from God at every moment. Sin which covers God's glory with shame, witnesses also to His existence, His Law, and His rights. The notion of God is involved in the notion of sin. Moral goodness is often pusillanimous. It wants generosity and bravery. Whereas badness is often so grafted upon natural virtues, and coexists with such magnificent natural gifts, that it seems quite beautiful and captivating. It extorts applause, while it is casting into the shade moral attainments, the littleness of Christian imperfections, or the feebleness of Christian beginnings, or the inconsistencies of Christian strife, which in the sight of God are far more precious and acceptable. And again it is by no means an uncommon thing to see a great amount of real moral goodness, with an almost fascinating loveliness of character, avowedly independent of God or of any belief in Him or reference to Him. And whatever may be the Christian explication of these phenomena, they are surely proofs that while God is so clearly manifest in the moral world that His servants wonder, as the poor Catholic wonders about the Blessed Sacrament, how men can miss seeing Him, nevertheless He is so concealed that multitudes do actually miss seeing Him through th disguises, contradictions, and vestiges of past catastrophes with which the world abounds. The time and the dispensation are not yet come for the Creator to force Himself irresistibly upon the notice and conviction of His creatures.

But God has not left the worlds either of matter, mind, or morals to themselves. He has mercifully interfered, and has flooded them all with another world of grace. How does He disclose Himself here? Here, obviously we should say, it must be in the way of unmixed revelation. Anything like secresy would, we might suppose beforehand, destroy the very object for which grace has been poured into creation. Nature may hide God, because nature has departed from God; and thus the intellectual world has been clouded and the moral world disordered, and in the material world God has consequently withdrawn Himself further out of view. But grace is God's weapon to get back all these worlds to Himself. It is light visibly interfering to reconquer the domain which darkness wrested from it. Grace is especially a divine interference; and to succeed as an interference, it must be visible, or else how shall it be acknowledged to be divine? This we might say beforehand. But let us consider the world of grace.

Let us gaze once more upon the radiant Vision of the Ever-blessed Trinity. We ponder the mystery of Creation. We look upon the Three Divine Persons as our Creator, and we consider the relations which arise between us creatures and God considered especially as our Creator, while we adore that singleness and unity of action of the Three Persons in all external works. But while we gaze, with our minds thus occupied, the Vision seems to change, and to represent in Itself the great and merciful mystery we are considering. The Third Person becomes to our eyes an illimitable sea of uncreated grace, deeper than we can think, and more refulgent than that we can bear to look upon it. It seems—remember how

human words are foolish stammering things in this matter — as if He moved and spread Himself out into boundless grace in order to be ready to create, as if grace were His creating attitude. Behold also! an apparent change comes over the Second Person, the Eternal Word of the Father; for He too seems outstretched in an abyss of boundless, fathomless, uncreated grace, and on the silent face of the crystal deeps is seen the communication of the Word to the Sacred Humanity of Jesus, which communication is itself uncreated grace, living and eternal, — not the act of communication which is created, but the gift, the Word communicated. The Eternal Father also manifests Himself as an august and beautiful infinity of grace, a very incomprehensible universe of uncreated grace, which is itself the love wherewith He loved us from all eternity, and the magnificent decrees by which He resolved from all eternity, not to create only, but to create creatures in a state of grace, and confer upon them supernatural gifts, incomparably beyond either the due or the exigence of their natures. God is grace. All God is uncreated grace. In His Unity, in His Trinity, He is uncreated grace. And behold! that Uncreated Sea has flooded all creation! How this is, it is beyond our power to tell; only we know that the wills of men are separate and free, and that nature is not God. But theological created grace is a true, real, intimate creation of uncreated grace. It comes one while as an impulse of the Divine Will, various in its strength as in its beauty, but itself an actual thrilling, exciting, fortifying touch of heaven; and then we term it actual grace: or another while it comes as a permanent state, endowed with supernatural sanctifying habits, and rich in miracul-

ous and instantaneously infused virtues, not declaring us only, but really making us, the friends of God, and in St. Peter's great words, giving us a participation of the Divine Nature; and then we term it habitual grace. And both these graces are supernatural gifts exceeding all the exigencies of our nature, far outstripping what is due to it, either physically or morally, and conducing to that, whither nature of itself can neither move nor stir, nor so much as point, the Beatific Vision of the Essence of God. Thus as the divine activity of creation is still going on every moment, even on this finished planet, in the continuous creation of new souls out of nothing, and as the active love and power of conservation is momentarily keeping in life and light the creation already made, so grace is in a higher and vaster sense, beyond either creation or conservation, a working of God, a supernatural creation and a supernatural conservation, going on at all hours the whole world over. It is God Himself in His most wonderful operations; and if we consider grace as preceding, accompanying, and following men at all times, exciting the will by the illustration of the mind perpetually, we get a view of it as if it were a peculiar and all-sufficient omnipresence of the single attribute of mercy. Yet to describe grace thus is to describe it as an almost impenetrable secret. If the workshops of creation and conservation, about which the physical sciences are occupied, were shown to be hidden sanctuaries, how much more the laboratories of those delicate, incomparable, and supernatural operations of God, which are a veritable alchemy of nature, an undeceitful transmutation of evil into good, and which we express by the single significant term of grace!

The peculiarity of the operation of grace will set this secrecy in a still stronger light before us. A child is brought to the baptismal font, fair and beautiful, and with all the winning gracefulness of infantine infirmity about it. But fair as it is, it is hardly God's possession. It is the trophy of the conquest of His enemy. A curse is on its soul; around its spirit is the darkness, and on all its faculties the hideous stain, or disabling imputation, of original sin; as it is, it can never see God, nor be an heir of heaven. It can inherit nothing beyond natural beatitude.* The exorcisms are but a prelude to the momentary act of baptism; and then what has happened to the child? A new birth far better than its first. The curse is broken off; it has become a child of God, a living member of Jesus Christ. Even in the eyes of heaven it shines with grace and beauty. Its soul, with the dormant reason there, is filled with supernatural habits which consecrate it into a sanctuary, and with a multitude of infused virtues which are the germs of angelic holiness. Yet as it lies in its nurse's arms, what change is there in its look, its eye, its limbs? Perhaps it has sunk to sleep there, tired with the attentions of which it has been the object, as an unfledged bird sleeps in its nest or the white lamb in the sunny field: or perhaps with cries and tears it is expressing its petulent vexation with the physical annoyance of the very salutary waters which have made it from a slave of Satan to be a brother or sister of the angels. Can God be more hidden than in this invisible regeneration?

* I do not wish to express any opinion on the views of Cardinal Sfondrato; but it must be remembered that, on this point, both Innocent XII. and Clement XI., as well as the French bishops, refused to condemn him.

A man who is kneeling next us in church rises and goes to the altar step; and he returns with God in him. The Babe of Bethlehem, the Boy of Nazareth, the Man of Calvary, He is within him. The very Body men nailed to the Cross, the very soul that enlightened Limbus, is within a few inches of us, working many wonders in our neighbour's soul and on his flesh, each of which is greater than the creation of the world. And yet what sign is there of it all? He comes back as he went: he settles himself to kneel as before. His thanksgiving ended, he passes out into the street. We watch him. All is as before. He has gone to his work, to his trade, to his home. There is not a look of mystery about the man, though such a thing has happened to him as angels would not have dared to dream, if it were not revealed to them.

Here is one we love, one over whom we have mourned, for whom we have prayed; and now our prayer is answered. We watch him into the confessional. Years of sin are upon him, complications of wickedness, the despotism of evil habits, the tyranny of malignant spirits. He comes forth absolved. Yet no one saw it. He felt nothing himself. He did not hear the whispered words. None of our Lord's miracles was equal to this, not the raising of Lazarus to life. Yet all looks the same. The tone of voice is not altered. Nay, he falls presently into little imperfections. Grace has little or nothing to show for itself even in the forgiven penitent. Why should God hide Himself thus in His most beautiful operations? Surely all the workings of one fervent communion, all the effects of one good confession, if they were shown to men as visibly as the workings and effects of an ingenious machine, could not fail to convert the world.

The remission of venial sins is another instance of the continual secret operation of God. Mortal sin is sin with a double action. It turns away from God, as well as turns towards creatures. Venial sin, on the other hand, turns towards creatures without turning away from God. It is a remissness of our love of God, a growing cold of charity, an impeding of the free and vigorous action of grace; but all this short of turning away from God. Some theologians have taught that no repentance is required for the remission of venial sins, but that any good action, which pleases God more than the venial sin displeased Him, does virtually and of itself remit venial sins. Others, on the contrary, with Durandus, have held that formal repentance is necessary for their remission St. Thomas, with his school, occupies a middle ground. He teaches that mere habitual repentance is not sufficient, and that formal repentance is not indispensably necessary; but that virtual repentance is at once requisite and sufficient. By this virtual repentance St. Thomas does not mean every good movement which carries us towards God, but any good movement which connects itself with venial sin, making us hate everything which cools our love of God, and causing us to grieve for everything of the sort which we have committed, though we do not at the time of our sorrow put each of such faults formally before us, as we do in repenting of mortal sins. He teaches, moreover, that no new infusion of grace is necessary for the remission of venial sins, but that a movement of the grace of charity which we already possess is sufficient for that end: and that the imperfections of our movements of grace are in a very peculiar and mysterious way completed, fortified, and made efficacious by the benediction

of the Church, and by matter which such benedictions have rested upon and appropriated, such as are called *sacramentals* in theology, including the use of holy water, praying in a consecrated church, saying the Confiteor, and the like. These do not act themselves and with independent virtue, as the sacraments do, which require only the removal of obstacles to their operation; but they act by the work of the person using them, with an additional hidden efficacy derived from ecclesiastical use and benediction. Now consider the number of venial sins in the world, and remember that each one of them has got its own peculiar pain assigned to it in this world or in purgatory, and that each tells with a given force upon the soul of the sinner, and that the least of them is so contrary to God that not to empty hell and convert the heathen may we tell the slightest venial untruth; and then think what a wide-spreading, uninterrupted activity of grace is going on all over the world, compassionately unfastening these venial sins from off the souls of men. It is as if all earth and sea beneath our feet were but the covering of some immense, minute, and swift subterranean machinery, the velocity of whose revolutions baffled all calculation, and the trustworthiness of whose infallible action was so true that nothing could be truer. This is not the place to enter upon it; but the whole doctrine of venial sin and its remission is one of the most consummately beautiful provinces of theology. Enough has been adduced to illustrate the secresy of the divine operations in its incessant remission in unnumbered souls.

The depths and difficulties of the doctrine of merit warn us off from any prolonged consideration of it. But here also the same principle of concealment will be found

to prevail. What, in truth, are our merits but God's own gifts? Not that they are imputed to us by any mere fiction of mercy, but that His grace is so substantially operative that in giving us His gifts He makes them really our merits. Still His gifts they are; but He hides His own credit under the veil of our deservings. By mortal sin our merits are killed. They can find no place in the divine acceptation, for they cannot cling to a soul which has lost charity. They drop off from it by a law, in the nature of things. Years may pass; and we at last repent, confess, and are absolved; and there is at once an instantaneous resurrection of all our lost merits. The touch of grace has raised the dead to life. Suarez would tell us that they revive in their full extent, however little fervour our repentance may possess. Bannez would tell us that they revive only in proportion to the merit of our present fervour, and will add only to our accidental recompense in heaven, not to our essential recompense. Ledesma would tell us that they revive only in proportion to the merit of our present fervour, but that, independently of it, they add to our essential, as well as our accidental recompense; and by essential recompense theologians mean the union of the soul with God, and by accidental recompense the joy which the glorified soul derives from the good works it has performed.* Now it matters not to the present question

* The theology of this question of the essential and accidental reward is shortly as follows: — 1. Opinion of St. Thomas as interpreted by some, qu, 89, a. 5 ad 3: That the penitent receives only the accidental reward of his previous merits, i. e., the joy of them. 2. The opinion of S. Thomas as it is interpreted by Gregory of Valentia and other moderns: That previous merits revive even as regards their essential reward, but only in proportion to present con-

which of these views be true. It is the complete secresy of this undoubted work of grace, which is to our purpose. It is altogether hidden. Even he in whose favour this miracle is worked has no feeling of it.

Hidden in like manner is that secret strength of grace, which, in spite of what analogy would seem to require, hinders past sins from reviving when men fall from a state of grace. Sin was so strong that it could strike our merits dead, yet not so irrevocably but that grace could call them to life again. Whereas, grace has killed past sin so utterly, that no fresh sins can call the old ones back to life. They lie powerless, save that from their tomb a dark shadow of ingratitude rises as from forgiven faults, and thickens the gloom of the new fall with this melancholy aggravation; yet not even so can forgiven sins give rise to any new special sin.* And all these wonders God works beneath a veil.

It is hard to conceal that which is ubiquitous; and may we not almost predicate ubiquity of grace? Who is there whom grace does not visit? What hardened heart, which it does not try to soften? Theology teaches us that the ordinary power of God could not create a

trition. 3. Opinion of Suarez and many others: That they revive with all their old essential reward due to them, no matter how little fervour may accompany the present recovery of grace. There is a fourth opinion quoted in the Wurzburg theology as held by some of the older Thomists, which teaches that the grace given on repentance is given partly on the title of previous merits, and partly on the title of present contrition. But this opinion seems, in reality, to be fatal to the reviviscence of merits at all.

* So at least, St. Thomas expressly teaches: and so after him the Wurzburg Theology. Ingratitudo sequentis peccati non est peccatum peculiare, sed circumstantia peculiaris, nisi adjungatur expressa intentio contemnendi beneficium, vol. vi. pars. 2, p. 68.

creature which could harden itself against all grace, a creature which it should not be in the Creator's power to soften and convert. Look at the multitude of the baptized. There is not one on whom sufficient grace is not conferred to hinder him from mortal sin even to the very last hour of his life. There is not an adult heathen on whom sufficient aids of grace are not conferred to justify him, at the least by spiritual baptism. There is not a child dies without baptism in its mother's womb, but it is others who are in fault, and not the benignity of God or the copiousness of our Lord's redemption. There is not one soul lost which has not wilfully withdrawn itself from the blessed dominion of grace, and with whom grace has not struggled before it would let him go. Nay, even to the obdurate, grace is continually conveying itself, with daily opportunities, so as to confer on them a physical ability to rise and do well, even when the patient justice of God denies to them a moral sufficiency. And the whole of this is God's doing, His own gratuitous operation, to which man can in no way dispose himself, nor his works be either the physical or the moral cause of grace, nor can they merit it at first either of condignity or of congruity, nor even impetrate it with what strictly deserves the name of impetration. Thus, in the Church, besides the huge mass of habitual grace, the globes of dew on a clear autumnal morning are not so countless as the actual graces which are falling thick and fast every instant over the wide spiritual patrimony of St. Peter. And if outside the Church the dew of grace is far less plentiful, and weaker, and only given for the Church's sake, yet the ground is not dry as it was round Gideon's fleece: though alas! we see how it barely lays the dust.

Heaven rains grace on each soul outside the Church, at all moments, till the last of life, and the intended legitimate result of each grace is to lead them nearer to the one true Church, out of which there is no salvation, and to bring them under those Catholic sacraments to which it belongs to remit sin. Neither does grace fight with spirit only. Even matter may be most powerful weapons in its hands, as the Sacraments declare. That the operations of grace should be so universal makes it yet more wonderful that God could be so uniformly concealed beneath them, like Jesus beneath the sacramental veils.

But let us look at the cause of grace. I said that created grace came of that vast uncreated grace of which I spoke before. But how does it come to us? By what channel does it pass? Through what strait does it force its way into the limits of creation? There, where mysteries lie folded and doubled over each other, like the clouds of evening quenching the strong golden sun, there is the source, the cause, the fountain-head of grace. It is the Passion of our dearest Lord. The grace by which Adam wept, and the grace of Peter's tears, the grace of innocent Abel and the grace of the unknown sinner who has just repented somewhere while I have been writing these words, all alike have flowed from the Passion of our dearest Lord. But not to reckon the showers and streams, without name or course defined, that overspread the world from that Precious Blood, let us look at those definite powers into which this grace has principally been condensed. The seven sacraments grow out and branch forth from the Passion, as so many hiding-places of God. In that they are all sacraments, they are all alike; yet how different also, each from the rest! One while they

march abreast, another while in pairs, another while in unequal bands, and not seldom one by one. They may be classed by their likenesses and by their unlikenesses. One is accomplished in the consecration of matter; others in the use of matter already consecrated. Some act on the soul dead in sin; some only or primarily on the soul alive in grace. Some confer a character; others do not. Some are necessary; some only desirable, or accidentally necessary. Some require an ordained minister, some do not. Some may be reiterated, some conferred only once. Some vary their operations, together with their matter and form, according to the intention of the Church and the administrator, still remaining the same sacrament, as the sacrament of order. Some are the conditions of others, without which others are invalid. In one, God is hidden under water and His own Name. For another, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are concealed under the touch of chrism and the sign of salvation. In another, God lies hidden under human actions, and those of a most humbling kind; in another, under the will of two contracting parties; in another, under an uplifted hand or the delivery of an ecclesiastical instrument. In another, the soul is reached, with all its remains of sin, and often the suffering body too, under the unction of holy oil. Another is God Himself inexplicably shrouded under veils so delicate the summer breeze could blow them aside, and so impenetrable that angel's ken cannot pierce them, nor the weight of a falling world force them open.

Moreover, the Church, the mother of the sacraments, has not exhausted her teaching upon them. Strange to say, seeing the importance of the questions, there are numberless controversies allowed in the schools which

most intimately concern these sacraments. What belongs to their essence, and what only to their integrity, at what precise moment the sacrament is complete and the grace conveyed, what is indispensable to the matter and what cannot be spared in the form — on all these things, differently in the case of different sacraments, we are free to think and teach many things. It is as if the deeper we descend into these coverts of God, the more He hid Himself in the umbrage, as in the foliage of paradise of old. And does not all this bear out St. Thomas's description, "The sacraments are things in which the divine virtue operates salvation secretly?"

If then, the interferences of God were hidden in the world of nature, are they less so in the world of grace, although it be nothing else itself but an immense system of pure interference on the part of God? The whole world of grace is eminently a concealment of God; and yet that very concealment is itself the most luminous disclosure of His character and perfections: and the sacraments are the masterpieces of grace, and yet the deepest hiding-places of all. Indeed, so various is their beauty, so unearthly their structure, so mysterious their method, so delicate their touches, so revolutionary, and yet withal, so imperceptible their influence, so peculiar their commingling of matter and spirit, so bashful and instantaneous their miracles, so complete and finished their self-adjusting movements, and so luminous are they each, with its bright cloud of heavenly ceremonial, that quite a Science of the Divine Operations might be constructed out of the theology of the Sacraments alone.

SECTION VI.

GOD IN THEOLOGY AND IN THE CHURCH.

AMONGST the various sciences there is one which, because it speaks especially of God, is called theology. In spite of the usurpations of physics and politics, it is the queen of sciences. Its data are more sure; its methods more safe; its empire more magnificent; its results more permanently interesting; and its disclosures more vast, numerous, and heavenly, than those of any other science. It is in fact the rule and measure of all other sciences, and the only ultimate interpretation and harmony of them all. The value of all other sciences is in the proportion according to which they contribute to this mistress-science. Beautiful while in subordination to it, and contentedly shining with borrowed light, they become unsteady and misshapen, when they separate from it, and try to set up for themselves. Now if the view which we have been venturing to take of God be true, we should naturally expect to find vestiges of it in the science which especially discloses Him. It will not proceed in the manner we should beforehand have expected, and it will disappoint us by seeming imperfection, littleness, and unworthiness. It will conceal God at the very moment it is revealing Him, and in the same sort of way in which His grace and sacraments conceal Him. The Bible and apostolic tradition are a collection of revealed premises, out of which theology draws a multitude of conclusions, which it afterwards classifies, and then makes them the premises of still further conclusions: and I have already shown how the genius and structure of the Bible illustrate the divine

characteristics now under consideration, and the genius of tradition is even yet more strikingly of the same character. I pass on therefore to the formation of theological science, the historical formation of doctrine.

Doubtless the apostles were in possession of the whole of Catholic theology in its fullest possible completion; and apostolic tradition contains in germ every theological conclusion which heresy may require at any time to be elicited. Yet it does not appear that each separate generation of the faithful has a complete consciousness of the breadth and depth of the deposit which it guards; and consequently theology cannot be left to the mere sense of the faithful, without the living Chair of Peter and the infallible gift of the Holy Ghost. Beforehand we should have thought it more consonant with the dignity of God, that Christian doctrine should have been put out in its fulness, or a fulness at least equal with that of the Mosaic law. How many heresies would have been prevented, how many schisms hindered, how many distressing controversies spared, how many lost souls saved! But it was not God's way. His good pleasure was otherwise. Heresy was left to build up truth in spite of itself, like a convict at forced labour, and to erect it before the world's eye in all its glorious proportions as the intellectual temple of God. One by one truths were brought out and fitted into their places. Lights moved over the region of Christian doctrine. Now they fell upon the Eternal Generation of the Word and lighted up the depths of that fair but inaccessible mystery. Now they fell upon the truth and reality of His sacred Humanity. One while they illuminated the singleness of His Person, another while the Duality of His Natures. It was now His Soul

and now His Sacramental Flesh, now His Mother, now His two Wills, now His Church and now His grace, that was irradiated before the eyes of men. It would seem as if there was nothing succeeding generations were so beholden to as heresy.

But the processes by which these truths, or rather their relative bearings and proportions, were brought out, are sometimes almost a scandal to weak faith. What can be more trying than the quarrels of the different parties in many of the General Councils? What more miserable under some respects than Ephesus, what less winning than Chalcedon? Save that all these oriental confusions only brought out more and more continually the calm, placid firmness, the unquailing eye, the unflinching hand, the superhumanly equable voice and judicial moderation of Rome, whose sole decision was after all the one thing needful, nothing can be less consoling to the Christian student than the history of those very councils that are now dear to every true heart as the Divine gospels of the four evangelists. How unlike the Holy Ghost, the Eternal Spirit of truth, cooperating with the holy wisdom and grave reason and burning love of saintly men! Truly it was a chaos of human wills, ways, and minds, and He brooded over it and overshadowed it, and out of it came the infallible oracles of truth as sure as revelation.

The liberty of the schools, again, in theological questions is far greater than we should beforehand have expected. If so much is certain, why not more? If a thing is so true that it would be impiety to doubt it, why is not heresy also? Why should God have made clear up to this point, and not gone on to that? Why is nearly every doctrine half divine light and half human infer-

ence, with bars and streaks of blackness all over it, like those that Wollaston discovered in the solar spectrum? Many of the questions too which are left open seem to be just those which it would have been most desirable to close: and in some that which is of secondary importance is left open to disputation. Verily, there is no parallel to the liberty of the human mind in the theological world, except the freedom of the human will in the moral world, and the one seems very much to correspond to the other. It is an illustration of this that the very point where grace pieces on to nature is a matter of debate, the Scotists maintaining that a more perfect nature with an equal aid of grace, other things being equal, will produce a more perfect supernatural act, while the Thomists deny that it will do so. And the preservation of nature under the pressure and dominion of grace is simply defended by two anathemas, while the manner of it is an insoluble mystery.

Several of the most interesting departments of theology, the theatres of modern controversies, are based upon the negative censure of Condemned Propositions. There is something very peculiar, and to impatient minds vexatious, in this method of teaching.* In what sense is this or that proposition condemned? For what is it condemned, falsehood of doctrine, or petulance of expression? Is it false in its context, or false anyhow? And if it is false, does it follow that any one opposing theory is true, and what if there may be more than one? Yet there is a very great analogy between this method of teaching and that of Scripture. It is impossible for a student not to be

* Some modern writers have expressed themselves disrespectfully on this very subject.

struck by this resemblance. And how completely is it in keeping with God's whole way of disclosing Himself in the teaching of theology!

But what is the treatment which theology receives at the hands of the world? The science which proceeds on the premises of revealed truth and tells of the Creator is a byeword of contempt in the mouths of His creatures. It is not only utterly neglected, except by those to whom it is a professional duty, but it is thoroughly disliked. Any warmth of controversy in physical science is put down to zeal, and men discern in quarrels about formulas that much light was thrown on science by them and no little advance secured. But in theological questions, it is odious, bigoted, puerile, offensive. The method of the operation of a sacrament, necessary to salvation, is pronounced a question worthy only of a dark age. The minutest question about the polarization of light, or the anodes and cathodes of electricity, is on the contrary of deepest import to the human race, and worthy of the speculation of the most magnificent and intellectual age the world has ever seen. If theology stands aloof from and is awhile suspicious of some crude theory, which will ere long and on other grounds have to divest itself of what is untheological about it, then the cry is raised that religion is opposed to science. If on the other hand theology dares to lift its voice to help in the solution of a geological mystery, or to throw light on an astronomical hypothesis, or to add probability to a physiological theory, or to have its say about the doctrine of innate ideas, then it is churlishly told to keep to itself, and not to meddle with science. Yet if science comes upon its ground and invades theology, as Galileo did when he strove to make

his scientific theory an article of faith and the rejection of it to be an unscriptural heresy, and he is beaten off his ground and warned to keep to his physics, then forsooth it is persecution, and I know not what darkness and barbarity. Do what it will, theology cannot please the world. If it pipes to men, they will not dance. If it mourns to them, they will not weep. It fares on earth even as our Lord did. Men will not be content with it. They do with it what they do with nothing else except with Him. They hate it and scorn it too, they are at once furious and indifferent, they suspect it and yet they are ignorant of it. In truth it belongs to God, and it shares His destiny.

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the ignorance of theology, even in many whose profession is an explicit avowal of its study. If we open a book of protestant controversy, and take any subject, say the doctrine of indulgences or the canonization of saints, we shall be quite startled to find clear evidence in nine cases out of ten, that the controversialist has never consulted a work of Catholic theology. Others again have opened books, not to read, or patiently to study contexts, but to verify references which they have found in other protestant writers. Protestant controversy has a tradition of its own. Objection and reply are handed on from one to another in the most meagre way, without a suspicion not only of the Catholic arguments but even of the true Catholic doctrine, and often with an exultation, quite ludicrous, of controversial discovery; and as the perusal of these works is for the most part confined to protestants themselves, the ignorance remains unexposed. Thus in a work by one of the most noted of these controversialists

we find assumed as a major premise, a doctrine about the mass, which even a perusal of the rubrics of the missal would have shown to be the most gratuitous imagination, and a protestant layman is congratulated on having put the question of the canonization of saints on an entirely new ground by a felicitous objection, so cogent the writer wonders it could be new; yet the very objection was put centuries ago by St. Thomas in his Quodlibet, and amply refuted by him, and modern works of controversy have often repeated it, even in our own language. But in truth the interval from the reformation up to some favorite early century is regarded by these men as if it were a simple blank. Though systems of philosophy and theology arose in them which absolutely governed the human mind for centuries, and which men of the highest powers in modern times, such as Fenelon and Bossuet and the protestant Leibnitz, have looked upon as works of intellect of the most amazing depth and beauty, yet these men know nothing whatever of them, and have plainly never read them. Again, from the Council of Trent downwards, the Church has had a succession of theologians of the most profound thought and the most brilliant genius, yet we hardly ever see in modern Anglican controversy the slightest vestige of the writers having read Vasquez, Suarez, De Lugo, Viva and the like, but on the contrary plain evidence that they have not. In the same way writers on physical science and political economy look vacantly and wearily into ages when the whole scientific structure of theology* was being raised by almost superhuman efforts of erudition and intelli-

* For example, Degerando's Histoire de la Philosophie

gence and gifts of a strictly scientific kind, and pronounce that nothing was doing in those times. It is impossible to open any work of the accomplished literature of the present day without perceiving the marvellous ignorance of theology. The authors hardly ever speak of the doctrines or usages, for example, of the Catholic Church, without making such absurd blunders that we feel like men who are reading the pretended travels of a foreigner in our own land, with amusing and provoking evidence in every page that he has never seen what he describes nor has ever set foot upon our shores. And yet these very men are writing books which professedly treat of theological subjects, and when we ignore them or leave their precious lucubrations unanswered, they think it passing strange and peevish in us that we can find anything more important or more interesting in life than to answer their objections, which have been answered completely a hundred years ago, or to defend doctrines, which are in good truth as much and as little a part of the Catholic religion as the tenets of Buddhism, the beliefs of the Esquimaux, or the latest revelations of Nauvoo!

The importance of all this matter to us is that we naturally suffer from the contagion of our times and circumstances. To Catholics the intelligent study of theology is always an affair of the greatest consequence, both as regards their social weight and influence, and also the depth of their devotion. But the present times render this study more important than ever. Intellectual activity is the order of the day. Reasons must be had for everything, and doctrine must show itself equal to the philosophical and scientific developments of the age. Meanwhile, almost every nominally Christian sect has

drifted away from its original principles, and has thus lost all distinct consciousness of what it believes and what it does not believe, and has so completely abandoned all theological habits that it has no suspicion of the consequences to which it may be logically carried. Hence the importance to us of having a complete and intelligent appreciation of our faith. Outside the Church half the world is trying to do without a religion at all, and the other half of the world is on the look-out for a religion. Surely this is a time for the study of theology. Men of all ranks are deeply interested in the achievements of astronomy, the revolutions of geology, and the dawn of new worlds in chemistry, and a world-wide battle on the fields of physiology; so that popular manuals and histories of sciences are in the hands of every one. When the time comes to many of them to feel an equal interest in the mysteries of the Holy Trinity, in the wonders of the Incarnation, in the systems of grace, in the science of the Sacraments, they will come to the study with habits of mind which a true theological, by which I mean especially an uncontroversial, treatment of these things will alone satisfy. The amount of the harvest of souls, which we shall reap in this general breaking up of opinions, will depend in great measure, under God's blessing, upon the spread and appreciation among ourselves of an intelligent theology, and of theology as a science, independent of mere barren controversy. People will want to know what is actually said and thought, not what may be said or thought in the face of certain objections. The national formula of our countrymen is not merely "the truth, and the truth only," but also 'the whole truth."

But our own spiritual welfare also is not a little concerned in this. The more our understandings are laid hold of, impressed, and interested with sacred things, the more easy will it be to keep our hearts on God. Not but that the study of theology may easily be divorced from the life of grace; yet the one is a natural reinforcement of the other. Feasts will be kept with greater devotion when we understand and are delighted with the particular mysteries which they celebrate. Indeed, there is a close connection between devotion and theology. The devotions of one age become the dogmas of another, as in the case of the Immaculate Conception; and the dogmas of one age become devotions in others, as it was with the mysteries of the Sacred Humanity and the Maternity of Mary. And thus time goes on commuting dogma into devotion and devotion into dogma by a double process continually. There is no safety in devotion if it be separated from dogma, though it may sometimes go before and sometimes follow after. So that even in a devotional point of view it is well to know what is of faith, what is not of faith but which it is rash to doubt, what are open questions, what are pious opinions, what popular devotions have been indulgenced, what have lower sanctions, and what have apparently met with rebuff and indirect reproof, like the Servitude of Mary, devotion to Mary in the Eucharist, and a particular development of devotion to the Eternal Father.

The feverish and exclusive excitement of material interests is passing away and a reaction is at hand. No one can watch the philosophical tendencies of the age in other countries as well as our own, without seeing that we shall shortly have the nineteenth century knocking at the

doors of theology, and demanding to graduate in her schools. And just as we left physical science, with the still curtained sanctuary of life in the midst, and discovery growing bolder round it every day, so with theology we have the ark which hides the secret union of faith and reason, still enveloped in doubts and difficulties, and with an imperfect light round about it, and catholic science every year making new and interesting efforts to bring it into the full radiance of theological teaching. Theology will become the study of the age; and the harmony of faith and reason its critical and characteristic question.

But to return. We may look at theology in two ways. Either we may contemplate it in itself, its method of teaching us about God, the nature of its processes, the history of its structure, the vicissitudes which heresy imposes upon it, and all its peculiarities as a science, or we may regard men's treatment of it, their ignorance of it, their indifference to it, their refusal to recognize its rights, their contempt of it, their suspicion and their hatred; and from both points of view we behold in it an accurate representation of the way in which God vouchsafes to appear in His own world, and the treatment He receives from His creatures. It is as God in nature, as Jesus in Judea, as the Blessed Sacrament in the Church. The over-sight of God in nature, the dislike of Jesus in Judea, the neglect of the Blessed Sacrament in churches, the total want of interest in theology, a science which deals with the most interesting questions in the most interesting way, these are all kindred phenomena, expressions of the same profound mystery.

From theology let us pass to the Church. It is of the essence of the Church Militant to be visible. It is the

pillar and ground of the truth, the Bride of the Lamb, a city set upon a hill which cannot be hid. The Church is a government and a kingdom, a society and an institution, a witness and a missionary. Her business is to teach, to command, to console, to edify, to punish, to praise, at all times and in all the ends of the earth. Thus light is her very life and office; and although we must now expect to find the Church in analogy with God's other ways of manifesting Himself, yet obviously we shall look for fewer and fainter vestiges of His hiddenness here than elsewhere. How far do facts bear out this expectation? We may look at the Church as a government, as an institution, and as a missionary; and in every one of these functions we shall find just the same divine method, revealing by concealing. As a government the Church does not immediately recommend herself to men as a manifestation of heaven, as the Vicariate of God. The civil power in all ages, and even when saintly men were at the head of it, has exhibited a most inordinate jealousy of the Church, and an instinctive desire to intrude into her domain; and indeed protestantism, as a political movement, was mainly a transfer of the spiritual government of men to their temporal rulers; while the rulers themselves preferred, in their inexperience, to be controlled by revolutions rather than by popes.* To the multitude of the modern world the narrow spirit of nationality is a more acceptable and attractive thing than

* Speaking of the temporal jurisdiction of the popes, Nettement says, Les rois et les peuples ont-ils beaucoup gagné à sa disparition? Il est permit d'en douter, car les papes ont eu, dans cette fonction, une formidable héritière, la révolution.—Littérature de la Restauration. ii. 185.

the wide and comprehensive theory of Catholicism.* It seems to them more plainly an ordinance of God. The whole of the beautiful machinery which the Church possesses to guide, to elevate, to console, to convert, to beautify the souls of men is explained by the world on the single coarse principle of priestcraft. The jurisdiction of the pope, with freedom of communication with Rome, instead of the palladium of liberty, which it has over and over again proved itself to be, looks to a jaundiced eye as a thraldom than which no human tyrant can be greater. As a matter of fact and history, the Church as a government has been immensely powerful; and yet men despise her. As a matter of fact and history, she has been of all governments the most patient, forgiving, and benign; and yet men hate her. As with God so with her. They despise His power, and they are irritated by His mercy. The secret both of men's

* Thus even anti-Catholic writers on the philosophy of history notice how all the theories of humanity split up and become narrowed as soon as the study of history was divorced from belief and from allegiance to Catholic unity. In Raymond, Lully, Arnold of Villeneuve, Repescissa, Postal, and the Franciscan Campanella, the grand Catholic idea of humanity, as one family with a single destiny, predominates even over all the millenarian vagaries and wild heresies of the "Eternal Gospel." But later on Machiavel has no idea beyond a nation; Vico isolates tribes and populations; Montesquieu makes climates and individual legislators do all his work; and his school have been reproached for writing history as a series of chance episodes. Nor would it be hard to show how even the broadest views of the modern doctrine of progress, in Herder, Lessing, Kent, Condorcet, and others, fall far below the grandeur of the old Catholic idea. A Catholic would have to guard himself from being misunderstood, if he used Bacon's words, History, like geography, has its deserts.

indifference and of their dislike to the Church as a government lies in this single truth, that she is a theocracy.

If we contemplate the Church as an institution she looks still less like God. It does not seem as if her object was so much to produce fine characters, like the heroes of the heathen world, as simply to multiply the fruits of our Lord's Passion and to spread the sacraments. Indeed the fear of hell, the physical character of its prominent punishment, the reverence for minute ceremonies, and the observance of such positive precepts as that of Friday's abstinence, under pain of mortal sin, seem in the world's judgment more fitted to render men little than great, trifling than serious, selfish than charitable, pusillanimous than brave. Writing to Catholics I am not concerned to defend the Church; I am only stating the natural view which an unenlightened world takes of the Church as an institution. Her doing more than she undertook to do is even turned into an eclipse of her divine character. Founded by God for a spiritual end, it is urged that she cannot be from God, because she does not accomplish a temporal one. Because all the heavy work, in fact the solid foundations, of European civilization, such as the sanctity of marriage, the mitigation of slavery, the courtesies of warfare, the glories of law, the limitations of despotism, the preservation of literature, the founding of universities, and the patronage of fine arts, were all her creation, that she does not do by herself exclusively the easier work of completing this civilization, but lets diplomacy and physical science share the toil and carry on what it was at the outset a mere bye-play on her part to begin, men conclude that as an institution she knows of nothing but timidity and retrogression, and that she who

is the light of the world is never happy except when she has become its darkness. Neither do men suspect, that when she seems to fail as an institution, it is because the civil power is cramping her as a government: nor again that an institution, which seems at certain epochs to be in the attitude of keeping other institutions in check, may be in truth discharging an office of the largest wisdom and the most far sighted philanthropy. Anyhow to the eyes of men the Church as an institution looks old, feeble, antiquated, undignified, and losing ground. She seems to parody the divine ways more than exemplify them, and to be rather a disrepute than otherwise to Him whose sole ambassadress she claims to be.

She is hardly more attractive to the world's blood-shot eye as a missionary. The mere work of saving souls is not one in which the world can be expected to interest itself very warmly. Preparations for eternity are not complimentary to time; and to teach dislike of the world is hardly a title to its love. It is indelicate as well as unwelcome to examine symptoms and parade remedies for an undignified disease, when it is the patient's monomania that he is without disease at all. Hence casuistry, moral theology, and the maternal solicitudes of the confessional, which seem to us so kind, so gentle, so beautiful, and so inspired, exasperate the world and irritate its nervousness to a degree it positively cannot bear. In like manner her ceremonial, shreds of beauty caught from the heavenly worship of the Immaculate Lamb, and wrought with inspired craft into a system whose beauty ravishes souls and is too deep for tears, too fair for earth, is tawdry pomp, tinsel magnificence, heartless formality, lifeless puppet-show to those whose eyes are blinded and their hearts

hardened. Like her Lord, the Church can do nothing right. Everything she says or does is taken in a wrong sense. It is only the poor penitent thief, not the rulers and nobles, that find out at last that she has done "nothing amiss." Thus with her, government is tyranny, conversion is proselytism, sanctity is unnatural asceticism, martyrdom is obstinacy, perfection is enthusiasm, gentleness is laxity, strictness is arrogance, and punishment is an assault on the rights of man. Thus everything in the Church is a hiding-place of something divine; and the world is forever trying to break in to see what is behind, discontented it would seem with its own vulgar explanation of the whole, just as the indelicate tyranny of its baser sort would fain scale our convent walls and lay bare the privacies of bashful holiness, as if they could see anything there which they could understand, anything more than the ruffians who stared into the Face of God made Man and by instinct spat upon it. Successful as she has been, who will say that the venerable beauty of the Church is not hidden, as her Bridegroom's was? Who, with the world in his heart, hears only the mother's voice, sweetly warning, wisely warning, in the Index of Prohibited Books? Or who looks for the unvaried patience and gentle perseverance of a father's love, a love which so loves that it cannot despair, in the processes of the Inquisition? In the missionary years of our Blessed Lord, it was love that emptied the temple with a scourge and overthrew the seats of the money-changers. It was love which spoke in parables, and would do no miracles where men did not believe. It was love that called the pagan woman a dog, and Herod a fox, and addressed Peter as Satan. And it was love that cried out woe upon the rich,

and cursed the fig-tree, even though He knew that malediction would be the secular scandal of unbelieving philosophy.

Historically as well as doctrinally it has been shown that the service of God is incompatible with the service of the world. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." So has it been with the Church. In all her relations the world and she are incompatible terms. She has but one office to it, which is to weaken it, to break it up, to master it, and to subjugate it, and to save it in spite of its own wicked self. Thus as God is in the world, so is the Church in the world. Neither is she without parallel to Him as He vouchsafes to show Himself in the Bible. She claims, as He does, universal dominion; for her dominion is by virtue of His. She, as He is, is ever putting out her claims, and never having those claims allowed, yet going on her way without compromise, without abating one hairsbreadth of what seem such extravagant pretensions. Surely this is not worldly-wise, and she so dangerously sagacious and insinuating as men will have it she is! Like Jesus in His Infancy, she is weak, helpless, and ungodlike in her outward seeming. Like Jesus in His Boyhood, she is shy, silent, inactive, contemplating. Like Jesus in His Ministry, she is careless of applause, seeks not the great, often repels advances as if she read the heart, takes to unlikely unpersuasive ways, and does not lay herself out to the greatest advantage. Like Jesus in His Passion, she is always having the worst of it with the world, seeming to be coming to an end, tired out, and on her death-bed. Every age and every year she is surviving some Calvary or other, which it was confidently prognosticated must at last be fatal. Like Jesus Risen,

and like God always, her glory is best recognised when it has passed onward. So God showed Himself to Jacob, so to Moses, so to Elias. So Jesus manifested Himself to Magdalene in the morning and at Emmaus in the evening. In primitive times the Church was the scorn of men, and now the world glories in the beauty of the work. In the Middle Ages the world was impatient of her, yet now heretics even rehabilitate her mediæval history. Everything is allowed to her but the present, and the present is never allowed because it is never recognised. As God is, so is she; as Jesus in His Sacrament, so she also.

SECTION VII.

THE WORKS AND WAYS, THE WEIGHTS AND MEASURES, THE FAILURE AND SUCCESS, OF GOD.

We have now cast a rapid glance over the realms of matter, mind, morals, grace, theology, and the Church, and in all of them we have seen that the Most High vouchsafes to disclose Himself after an uniform manner, and in a peculiarly unlikely hidden way. But there are two other points of view from which we may reverently venture to look at God influencing His own creation, and which are so remarkable that before summing up the valuable results we have obtained by this research, we must say a few words on each of them. God condescends to represent Himself in Scripture as making Himself different to different persons, as treating a man as the man treats Him, just as Origen says of our Blessed Lord on earth that He was in the habit of appearing in different guise to different men, according to their degree of moral purity. Scripture sometimes speaks as if it was in every

one's power to have God as he would like to have Him, as if men could make their own God and give Him what spirit they chose. These are very bold words; but weigh the expressions in the seventeenth Psalm and the Second Book of Kings. It was just before David's death, and summed up his manifold experience of God. "With the holy man Thou wilt be holy; and with the innocent man Thou wilt be innocent, or with the valiant perfect; and with the elect Thou wilt be elect, and with the perverse Thou wilt be perverted." And then as if he felt the magnitude of the mystery he had just been disclosing, he adds, "God—His way is immaculate; the words of the Lord are fire-tried." Now if God, in His inscrutable wisdom, deigns thus to follow the lead of men, and to appear to them according to the imaginations of their own hearts, it is plain, that however He may please to limit this method of operation, it is one which must necessarily make His ways hidden. Thus His dealings with His friends, His enemies, particular nations, and different ages, must be considered as exemplifying this divine peculiarity.

What can be more hidden than the way in which God deals with His friends, those to whom, because of their little holiness, He shows Himself in His immense holiness? The doctrine and experience of prayer are full of this concealment. When God subtracts from us sensible sweetness, it is either a loving honour or a loving chastisement. When He raises us from one degree of prayer to another, it is often suddenly and without apparent cause, and frequently without our being in the least aware of it. The different states of prayer so lose themselves in each other, that they can hardly ever be definitely and separately

recognised, but are rather conceived separately for the convenience of mystical theology. The whole matter of the answers to prayer is full of various disguises and concealments; and when we are raised in the scale of contemplation, the test of our elevation is in the increasing indistinctness of our views of God; we approach the dark-bright cloud of St. Denys, and the clear-obscure light of St. John of the Cross. The operation of the Sacraments, simply as a matter of mystical experience, is equally mysterious. Sometimes with fervent communions no ground seems to be gained; at other times with dry communions we seem to leap into fresh regions of spiritual life, without passing through the intervening space. The effect of corporal penances on the soul is perpetually bringing this way of God before us. When our vocations, or great crises of our spiritual life, are presided over by spiritual direction, how often do secondary causes seem to exercise an undue influence over the decision, and how hard it is to be as sure as we fancy we ought to be that the decision of our director is of a truth the voice of God. Want of talent, of temper, of deliberation, of an interior spirit! how often is God behind those screens, and hard to recognise until the moment He disappears! Even when He grants us supernatural favours, we can hardly tell whether they are not rather delusions of His enemy; or whether in our own case it is not better to put them away, and to pray against them; and how strange and unworldly and unlike our own selves is that extreme desire to keep them secret and not to tell them, which invariably accompanies them, seeming to contradict our Lord's word that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Then there is all the hidden love which is implied in the friends of

God being chastised more than other men, and so their sanctity, not only fearfully tried, but laid open to doubt and to rebuke. And last of all, intimacy with God seems specially to result in a secret spirit. The instinct of holiness is to burrow, to get out of sight, and hide in convents, in hermitages, in solitude, in secret prayer. A degree of charity to others, which is sufficient to overcome many grievous defects, is sometimes quite inadequate to counterpoise this propensity to hide itself, with which the familiarity of God seems so uniformly to infect the soul. It seems almost more to us to keep our secret than to convert a sinner.

God's dealings with His enemies are of the same character. The uninterrupted prosperity, which makes men bless them, is to a spiritual discernment a disclosure of God which makes a religious heart tremble; and while it seems to a man only the legitimate consequence of his own ability and industry, it is often the carefully-measured and accurately-proportioned reward of his natural virtues, amiable qualities, human kindliness, and moral worth. God has no more fearful disguise than this penal prosperity. What is in truth the sentence of reprobation, but those words, Thou hast had thy good things, Mercedem accepisti? Lord! said St. Philip, let me not have my reward in this life! Yet when we see these men, succeeding in all they undertake, heedless of religion, and as it were without a thought of God, how many calls are they hearing from Him, which no one knows of but themselves, how many secret graces are knocking at their hearts, with temporary softenings and partial successes, for all which they must give account! But there are many graces of which even they themselves are unaware,

and which to all eternity will lessen the severity of their punishment. For there is hardly a day passes but God hinders them from sins, from which nothing but the special provisions of His compassionate providence preserves them. Alas, there are unconscious graces also, the unknown neglect of which must enhance their everlasting doom. Such are the opportunities thrown in their way of learning the true faith, of returning to the sacraments, of doing penance for their evil deeds. Chance sermons, promiscuous conversation in public places, the accidental opening of a book, examples suddenly set before them with a strong light upon them,—till the day of judgment no man knows how copiously his path has been strewn with graces such as these. And all this is God, and how hidden, how unexpected, how impenetrable!

In like manner does He deal with different nations. Each nation, each national character, has its own grace, and a certain corresponding work to do for God in the history of humanity. The natural virtues of each nation have their reward, as Roman justice and truth were crowned with inordinate length of empire: neither is it impossible that the huge empire of the Anglo-Saxon blood and tongue may have some similar interpretation There may once have been some natural good in us, whose benediction we have not yet quite outlived. The history of each nation tells of divine chastisements, in which however at the time the hand of God was barely recognised. Each nation has had its own witnesses sent to it, such as suited it and appealed to it in the most congenial way. Each has had the Gospel come to its shores after the fashion it liked best. Each has had, as and

when it needed them, its saints, its doctors, its holy kings, its war, its peace, its plenty and its dearth; and all these things doled out with wisdom, with love, with peculiar significancy, with choice, with preference, and with intention. Yet it was hidden at the time. On looking back, and studying the chronicle of our country, we can each of us see that it is in its way a repetition of the Old Testament, a series of providential interpositions, a guiding hand directing its vicissitudes and controlling its reactions and invigorating its progress, God manifest everywhere. But our ancestors, if they saw it at all, saw it only indistinctly at the time.

And as it has been with the different nations of the earth, so has it been with the different ages of the world. Each age has its own character impressed upon it, its own work entrusted to it, and its own method of doing it suggested to it. Blind time seems as if a reason were infused into it. Each feels the rod of its own chastisement; and each, freshened by punishment, is crowned with its own peculiar success. Each age has its own man given to it, often an unknown man at the time, although the whole age shall be an exhalation of his genius; and finally each age has its own dramatic place, like the acts in a play, between the age that went before and the age that follows after. And as with the nations, so with the ages, they put their own light and colour about God, and His wake over the sea of time is invisible just wher man and his rudder are making the water foam, but it is seen, silvery clear, behind, and far into the distance.*

* Since writing the above passage I have met with the following in Joubert. It is perhaps what would be called too *charitable*; but to a certain extent it is as beautiful as it is true, so far as it is ex-

The other remark I wished to make before summing up, was that in all these departments which we have been considering, it seems as if failure were a characteristic of the divine works; seeming failure, failure according to men's judgment, failure so far as God has permitted us to know His ends and objects. The physical world is a ruin, the moral world a wreck, the spiritual world a disappointment. What does all this mean? The marvellousness of God's ways magnifies itself visibly before us the longer we look at it. The creation of the angels was a failure; one-third fell, and the hostile empire which they at once set up against God makes new conquests daily and enlarges its fiery limits. Paradise was a failure: it ended in the fall, gentle as was the precept and light the dispensation. Both angels and man were created in a state of grace, so that nature by itself has never yet been tried. The patriarchal system failed, or at least it only kept the true tradition in one line of one family. The law was a failure; idolatry came in spite of it; its wisest man himself became an idolater; and when our Lord appeared, what was left of the spiritual Israel, but Simeon, Anna and the like? Look at the world now, and say, if, in men's way of speaking, the Gospel has not been a failure also? Is the world religious, is it Christian? So in the Church particular

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pressive of the just goodness of God. Dieu a égard aux siècles. Il pardonne aux uns leurs grossièretés, aux autres leurs raffinements. Mal connu par ceux-là, méconnu par ceux-ci, il met à notre décharge, dans ses balances equitables, les superstitions et les incredulités des epoques où nous vivons. Nous vivons dans un temps malade: il le voit. Notre intelligence est blessée: il nous pardonnera, si nous lui donnons tout entier ce qui peut nous rester de sain. *Pensées*, i. p. 105.

Churches die out, as in Africa, or fall away, as in Greece, or are inundated by heresy as in some of the petty German states, or are devastated by unbelief as France in the eighteenth century. Religious orders rise, are fervent, flourish, decay, are reformed, decline, and die. God will have things one way, man another. God will have the government of Israel theocratic; the people will have it regal, and they prevail. God will have the holy ordinance of matrimony hallowed; but the hardness of men's hearts causes Him to let Moses legislate for unhallowed divorce. Men's unbelief could hinder our Saviour's miracles. All this is an appalling mystery. In the happy plenitude of our blessed faith, which knows no doubt and is crossed by no shade, we know that the Most High is the Lord of Hosts, the God of victories. Each day, each hour, each moment, He is winning some glorious battle, and the angels keep festive triumph round His throne. He is always leading captivity captive, and in all creation He is a mighty warrior, irresistible, magnificent, supreme, "faithful and true, and with justice He judgeth and fighteth. His eyes are as a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems, and His garment is sprinkled with blood, and His Name is the Word, and on His thigh is written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords."* Yet all this is not after men's measures nor according to their standard. The appearance of things is as if everywhere the Flight into Egypt were being enacted, and God was a fugitive before the face of His own pursuing creatures. It is as if He took up post

* Apoc. xix.

after post in His own creation, and fortified Himself there as if He should abide; and He is besieged and His fort taken, and He retires to another; and again the same mysterious drama follows. Thus, God seems perpetually falling back and falling back, further and further, in His own kingdom, while we, His creatures, usurp His crown, and hold His territory against His will, as if we were an army of occupation, gradually turning our conquest into a peaceful right. This is the aspect under which God vouchsafes to let things appear. It is man's obvious way of reading history. Apparent defeat, the semblance of frustration, lies like an intense mist over the ground of God's holiest operations. Were it not for simple, joyous, child-like faith, the clearest eye might quail, the stoutest heart tremble, before this astounding spectacle of a defeated God. All nature and all grace, all angels and all men, all creation and all redemption, gathered into one point and so disclosed to men, and lo! that one point is a skull-strewn Calvary with the Dead Christ upon the Cross! Ah! we sometimes boast of human freedom, and want men to weigh their words more sparingly when they speak of the Sovereignty of God; but with this view before us, let us look over the wide weltering sea of human liberty, and are we not afraid to behold it so stormy, and to know it to be so free? And what wilt thou do, poor human heart, thus frightened? Take the sweet thought of the dear sovereignty of God, and make a nest therein, and never leave it all life long. O sweetly shalt thou rest, and safely too, head, heart, and hand, and all, while the tempests howl and the billows foam, if only thou art cradled in

all simplicity on the sovereignty of the God of Victories!*

Before we go further, let us pause for a moment, and consider into what an atmosphere all these considerations have been leading us. It is as if we had crossed the barrier of another kingdom unawares. The old coins have no currency. Here are new weights and different measures, fresh skies, changed manners, other stars in the heavens, and the sound of another language. We have passed out of human ways of thinking into God's ways. We begin to see with God's eyes and to judge with His judgments, as in His merciful condescension He would have us do. We have to unlearn nearly every one of our old principles of action, and to abandon our former canons of criticism, our earthly distributions of praise and blame. We cannot go far with God at once. Like the dwellers in a plain, who sink with fatigue as they ascend and descend alternately the ramparts of a mountain ridge, because they are using muscles that have grown soft through long inaction, so is it with us among these hilly paths of God. We are soon tired: and something worldly would rest our spirit, and

* This is of course a very different view of history from what modern eclecticism takes, with that propensity to optimism which the Alexandrian school and all its imitators have ever displayed. If I am not mistaken, but I am quoting without book, M. Cousin somewhere calls creation a necessary act. If so, his historical optimism is more intelligible. It would almost follow from his doctrine of creation. Yet, even so, the boldness of his conclusion is startling. "Je regarde l'idée de l'optimisme historique, l'idée d'un plan général de l'histoire comme la plus haute idée à laquelle la philosophie soit encore parvenue....Enfin on commence à comprendre et *à amnistier l'histoire à tous les points de sa durée.*" Cours de, 1828. Leçon. vii.

we should sleep more soundly down below where the air is less keen. Yes! the thought of God is rest, but the company of God is labour and fatigue. O blessed are they who can sustain themselves, or rather blessed they whom God sustains, in the high region of supernatural thoughts and things, until they can come down with an aspect so refulgent that they must needs go veiled among their fellow-men; and still more blessed they, and to the world, which their prayers uphold, a far more charitable blessing, whom God keeps in the mountain with Himself their whole lives long. Would that grace, which is daily making impossibilities practicable, might enable us to achieve that holiness St. Philip puts before us, Never in thought or act to need or seek recreation out of Jesus! At least, as divers practise their craft by painfully remaining under water longer and longer every day, so let us keep up with God, lengthening our strain upon nature day by day, bearing the glorious pain bravely, never looking down lest the various view of the sweet vales tempt us, and thus practising for His "high and holy place" hereafter.

It is now time to gather up the results we have thus obtained. I have briefly and rapidly touched on many points, each one of which might well take a volume to itself; and we have surely gained some such view as this. By contemplating the object of faith, the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity, we could never have conjectured whether God would have created a world, or if He did, what manner of world it would be, or whether he would live, would work, would hide, or would reveal Himself in His own Creation, or if He did, in what way, beyond sustaining it by His omnipresence, He would vouchsafe

to do so. Still, upon the whole, we should conceive of all God's apparitions, that they would be accompanied by light, glory, magnificence, amazement of the creature and instantaneous efficacy, though the manner of them would always be unexpected, from our inability to form any definite expectations at all. From the survey, however, which we have taken of the divine interpositions in creation, we now perceive that God has a peculiar and uniform way of His own, representing some idea in the Divine Mind, recognizable when once we have learnt it, and of a kind peculiarly adapted at once to give the fullest play to the free will of His creatures and yet to elevate them to the most submissive and intelligent worship of Himself. This method is not only unexpected as all His methods must have been necessarily unexpected, but it also systematically contradicts at every point such conjectures of what was likely, worthy, and fitting, as we might have ventured to have made from the knowledge of His infinite perfections. If we travel over the worlds of matter, mind, morals, and spirit, if we question history and theology, and if we take to pieces and examine the mysteries of creation, the incarnation, justification, glorification, and transubstantiation, we find everywhere, in nature as in grace, in grace as in nature, that this unexpectedness of the Divine operations resolves itself into five characteristic features, out of which it follows as a result or an inference, from a double necessity of God's perfections and our imperfections, *that He discloses Himself to us by hiding Himself.*

In the first place God's operations are for the most part accompanied by secrecy. He does not call witnesses, nor display Himself on the theatre of the open world.

Secondly, littleness is another of their characteristics. They are often what the foolishness of our wisdom would have pronounced unworthy of the heavenly Majesty. Their propensity is to lowliness, to fix themselves on what creatures value least, and consider least delectable. Thirdly, almost always the first act of omnipotence is to reduce itself to an apparent helplessness. The Most High seems anxious to forego what we may call the advantages of His divinity, and to appear as if He were only taking His chance with a crowd of other agents and forces in creation. It is as if He disdained to govern by the strong attractions of power, and preferred to put on the disguise of the sweetest and most piteous persuasion. Fourthly, the Divine Manifestations are almost always surrounded by ignominy. They do not of themselves strike respect and reverence into the world's heart. On the contrary, they are peculiarly liable to be mistaken and misunderstood; and there is a something about them which inspires fallen man with a suspicion and dislike which a steady contemplation of their apparent helplessness fixes at last into contempt. Fifthly and lastly, they have, with hardly any exceptions, the further characteristic of seeming to put the Creator completely in the power of His creatures. Our dearest Lord in the power of Herod and his brutal soldiery, a butt for rude military buffoonery in the courtyard of the tyrant's palace, is truly an awful picture of God in His own creation. He has given men His creation to use and abuse at will. He left them to do what they pleased with His law. He sent them His Son, as He had sent prophets before time, and they wreaked upon Him every kind of contumely and hate. His Written Word, His Holy

Church,—His marvellous Sacraments,—they are completely surrendered to men, either to their reverence or their sacrilege, their acceptance or their rejection, their patronage or their persecution. Thus secrecy, littleness, helplessness, ignominy, and being at the mercy of creatures, are the five laws of the Divine Interference in the world; and assisted by grace, we can almost get a habit of seeing God everywhere by the application of these laws. They form partly a theological and partly a spiritual instinct. What it concerns us particularly now to remark is, that these five laws include nearly all the infidel and heretical objections to the Blessed Sacrament, that the Blessed Sacrament does not stand alone in being open to them, that the Blessed Sacrament is exactly the same kind of manifestation of God, and the same sort of Presence, as He vouchsafes in matter, mind, morals, theology, history, and the Church, and finally that the Blessed Sacrament exhibits these laws in the most vivid and peculiar manner, and thus concentrates upon itself all the light, and divine beauty, and heavenly secrecy that is anywhere in the world, and that it is the exemplar and most finished and intensely godlike height, of Creation and Redemption, of Nature and of Grace. It is the culminating point and divine coronation of Creative Power, of Providential Wisdom, and of Redeeming Love.

Thus we look through the history of the world, and keep close to the footsteps of God as He moves among the nations and the ages, hiding Himself among them, and by contrary ways leading them softly and firmly to His ends, we shall track His presence everywhere by outward appearances of humiliation and seeming weakness. When His saints arise to serve Him, they are

instantly and on that account a butt for ridicule and ill-treatment; their likeness to the Creator makes them to be regarded as the offscourings of creation; and they serve in their lives and in their deaths as the victims for the worst passions of cruel men, which they conquer only by succumbing to them. Wherever God is in history, there we see Him abandoned by His creatures. As if there were some repulsion, some centrifugal force in Him who is the centre of minds and souls and lives. He makes a solitude before Him as He goes. He cannot get Himself known, or loved, or believed in. Everywhere and always a theatre is more than a match for a Church, a gay city for a dull convent, the civil power for the ecclesiastical. Men would rather be enslaved by the state than owe their emancipation to the Church. God is on one side, the world on the other; and blood, rank, money, talent, influence, on the whole are not with Him. Nay, ever and anon He must come into actual contact with His creatures, and then He has nothing to do but suffer bold ill-treatment; and for the most part the greater the scale wickedness is on, the more successful it is.

In these conjunctures nothing is more striking than the little faith of those who have any faith at all. The best men seem little better than traitors. Heroes are rare; they come to be heroes slowly; and when they have reached the point, they pass into the secret world of God, and are lost to earth. What are called good men are little better than traitors, always wishing to concede, to compromise, to meet the world half way. They make free with nobody's interests but God's. They are bold with nobody's rights but His. And Him they are throwing

overboard like a Jonas to the world's whale, for ever and for ever. It is their occupation and calling. This has been the history of the "good party," that is, of averagely good men, on earth from the beginning. Yet still, under this bold ill-treatment and this heartsickening treachery, God holds His peace. He is silent under outrage, as Jesus was before the tribunals. His government, when most provoked, is characterized by nothing so much as an absence of visible judgments, which we finite creatures so often think would be so useful and so salutary. Our very love of Him chafes under this, and He has been obliged to write it in His Word as a divine axiom, that the wrath of man worketh not the justice of God. Whether He be abandoned or whether He be outraged, He keeps Himself equally encompassed with hiddenness and secrecy. As we have already seen, His manifestations are in fact His most secret acts. When was God so hidden in the world's history as He was when He lived upon it bodily in Palestine? Were there ever such secrets before as Bethlehem, Nazareth, Gethsemane and Calvary? Moreover in all this history of God in His own world, there seems never to be any harmony, any peace, any mutual understanding between the Creator and His Creation. It is always strife, always war; and, which deepens the mystery, the world appears all along to have the best of it. Even when it is defeated, it does not recognise the Hand that vanquished it. Its very checks are said to be fate, accident, or laws; not the Personal will of the Three Divine Persons, One God. This is surely a fair view of God as He has vouchsafed to be contemporaneous with the nations and ages of the world.

But it is important that we should lay firm hold on this

idea. Let us, then, put side by side with this historical view of God a figurative view also. The inspired writers frequently ascribe human passions and human emotions to the Almighty, in order that by this economy and condescension we may be instructed in the mind and will of Him from whom are all the issues of life and death. Our Blessed Lord also represents Himself dramatically in parables, as when He shows forth the successive failures of God's merciful intentions to sinners by the treatment which the different messengers, and finally the Son, of the Lord of the vineyard receive from the wicked tenants. We shall perhaps better grasp the mysterious truth we are considering, if we venture to describe God, as we discover Him in the world, by a series of figures. Always it is the Same whom we beheld in refulgent majesty and beauty inaccessible, worshipped by the hosts of heaven, the Ever-blessed and Undivided Trinity.

With our eyes full of light of that astonishing Vision, with our ears yet ringing with the songs of angels and the triumphant canticles of the numberless Redeemed, and, above all, with our souls hushed and shrunk into themselves with excessive awe and bashfulness, longing almost for some chastisement to make us feel our nothingness lest haply we forget it, let us turn and look into the busy fields of created action, the thronged and complicated departments of human society; and how is it that we there behold the unutterable Majesty of the Most Holy Trinity? We behold Him, first, as a Slighted Father, one who is possessed beyond speech or thought with excessive love of His children, "stretching out His arms" to them all the day long, yet they will not return: killing for them the fatted calf, and they take it as a right; using

Him and all that He has for their own convenience, while their hearts never melt towards Him, and they coldly shun the embrace His burning love almost forces upon them. Would it be too bold to think of Lear's agony with his heartless daughters, as if in physical nature alone God might meet with some proportionate return; for the elements at least obey Him, and if they love Him not with reasonable love, at least He "taxes not them with unkindness," for He "never gave them kingdoms nor called them daughters?" He appears as an Unrequited Benefactor, from whom men are gracelessly taking gifts at every hour without one word of thanks or one attitude of thankfulness. They accept His bounteous and most gratuitous alms, not even as if they were receiving their rights, but as if they were being defrauded of them, as if the dole were stingy and beneath their due. They ask for more with careless gesture, in unpondered words, and with vulgar, not reverent, importunity. It is as if God were some machine, that when a spring was touched, and a wheel turned, should perform His functions, or be cast aside and broken up. He is an Unwelcome Visitor. "He comes to His own, and His own receive Him not." Men think that while He pretends to be a sojourner, He must needs be a spy. He disturbs them at their work, and interferes with the wild license of their free will. They say to Him as the devils said, "What have we to do with Thee, Thou Son of David?" Doubtless there is a life to come, say men; but why should not God let us alone now, why come "to torment us before the time?" His visits are never welcome; they are barely tolerated. Instead of being overcome with confusion as Peter was, when he said, "Depart from me, O Lord! for I am a

sinful man," and yet all the while he yearned to have his Master nearer still, men, even when He works wonders of mercy on them, beseech Him, like the dry and craven-hearted Gerasenes, to depart out of their coasts.

He is a Pauper in His own creation. All things from the highest to the lowest are His. Immensity is the limit of His absolute dominion. He needs no sacrifice, for His are "the cattle upon a thousand hills." Yet He is ever condescending to ask for the commonest things, for the vilest alms, for the waste and the refuse of the creatures whom He is hourly enriching. Yet not from one in a thousand does He receive what He pitifully implores. Those who give, give grudgingly, and with varying circumstances of ungraceful demeanour and a niggardly spirit. How eloquently He tells His tale, yet how few believe Him! He sits like a beggar in the cold, the scorn of disdainful eyes and the receptacle of unkindly words, all through this wintry day of free man's probation, while, above, the incense of prayer magnificently clouds His throne, and the piercing songs of the beautiful spirits in circles of delicious sound make music at His feet. He appears to us as Broken-hearted, wounded in all His tenderest sensibilities, coarsely smitten in His most delicate affections, laden with unmerited humiliations; and yet reproaching no one, not shutting Himself up within Himself, not laying Himself out any the less freely to new degradations, almost anxious we should not see how pained He is, lest we also should be pained ourselves, and wholly occupied in ministering to the pains of others, so slight, so transient, so skin-deep that they cannot bear comparison with His. He appears as a Benevolent Sage, old, venerable, kind, unselfish, and

wise, who is ever putting Himself out of His way to warn, instruct, and guide us. What more attractive than His manner, what more genial, and less burdensome, less wearisome? His voice is full of music, His words like the running of a cool stream under the fragrant boughs. Each one soothes a sore and heals a wound, animates the heart with joy, throws a whole new world open to the mind, and invigorates with fresh pulses of spiritual strength the lassitude of our way-worn time-tired souls. Yet while He prophesies to us happy things, we turn from Him with more disdain than Ilium from the melancholy, visionary lamentations of her ceaseless Cassandra. One while He is not listened to; another while He is rudely and indecently interrupted in His speech. Behold the two alternations in the treatment of this heavenly Sage! He appears to us again as a Complaining Friend, wronged and injured, entreating yet never reproaching, deprecating but never protesting. It is enough to break a heart, less hard than stone, to hear His lamentations in the prophets, to listen to the ineffable murmurs of His pleading. Yet no word of bitterness escapes. Nay, in His grief He finds excuse for those who have grieved Him; and if the prophet answers and takes up His strain and impeaches the sinner, the Plaintiff Himself becomes his advocate and lavishes His infinite wisdom upon his defence. When Job's comforters gloriously justified God at the expense of the uneasy sufferer, He cut them short with peremptory rebukes, silenced them, and bade Job offer sacrifice for them that the grandeur of their big words might be forgiven them. What is observable in these Seven Figures of God is that they are so touching; they put Him in such piteous

case; they make religion so full of tenderness, as if the softened heart, the flowing tear, were its truest service They look like blessed merciful artifices to win to themselves men's love. They flow out of the great ocean of God's Paternity.

But to these seven, at His own bidding, we must add an eighth, such an one as we should not have dared to add ourselves. It is His own. We have ventured, in all love and fear, trusting not to offend His ever-blessed Majesty, to put Him before ourselves in all shapes that shall provoke affection and awaken piety. But He condescends to liken Himself to something evil. Even if we love Him not, still for our own necessities' sake He would fain have us pray to Him, and go on praying, that He may soften our hearts at last by the very accumulation of His mercies. Let us be drawn to Him anyhow, so long only as we be drawn to Him. Let there be beginnings of piety, no matter how self-seeking at first they be. Anything shall be welcomed, for the sake of the hope of what will follow, and in great faith of the almost omnipotence of grace. And to show us all this, and more than this, more a great deal which we have in our hearts but which lies too deep for words, in the Gospel of St. Luke God stoops to compare Himself to the Unjust Judge who "feared not God nor regarded man," and whose selfish love of ease was vanquished only by the pertinacity of the importunate widow. "Now because this widow is troublesome to Me, I will avenge her, lest continually coming she weary Me." Such are the words which God, not only permits, but even suggests to us as a picture of Himself. We dare not comment upon them lest we should seem to make free,

When God Himself suggests familiarity, then is it time for us to be more stricken with awe than ever we were before.

Now put together these pictures of The Slighted Father, The Unrequited Benefactor, The Unwelcome Visitor, The Pauper in His Own Creation, The Broken-hearted Outcast, The Sage Ridiculed, The Complaining Friend, and the Unjust Judge. Do they not form of themselves a positive revelation of God, of God in the world? Try in the minuteness of careful and loving meditation whether they do not equally compose the eighteen hundred years' biography of the Blessed Sacrament in the churches of men. Draw them out and dwell upon them one by one, and you will see how much they will bring out that is beautiful, tender, touching, holy, and divine. They are enough of themselves to form a complete theology of the heart. But in truht if we scrutinize God to the utmost in His own world, if we put the Creator into every conceivable relation to His creatures which reverent analogy will allow, if we take the measure and transcribe the outlines of every one of His operations which He permits us to detect, we shall still find that we have all the while been discovering and multiplying similitudes and illustrations of the Blessed Sacrament. The Blessed Sacrament lies at the bottom of Creation, impregnating it all with its own divine Idea, and it appears again at the top clasping all mysteries together in one radiant point of union, the last legacy of Jesus, the masterpiece of Redeeming Love, the pearl surmounting the Diadem of all Creation.

There is a vision given in the meditations of Sister Emmerich, which is, to say the least of it, most artisti-

cally beautiful. Jesus, to be least troublesome, has been sunk by His guards into a kind of well; and is sitting at the bottom with His hands tied behind Him. The sun of Good Friday rises above the hills, and mounts into the sky, and at length has attained sufficient altitude to pierce the well with one slanting ray. It lights on Jesus. That solitary beam of brightness illuminates Him in the depth of His dungeon, and He raises His drooping eyes to meet it. The creature is illuminating its Creator. His face is pale as death, disfigured with blood and earth and spittle, His hair drenched, matted, and disordered, His hands manacled and pinioned, His vesture disfigured and disarrayed: and there He is in the first light of that sun at whose setting the great mystery of woe will be complete and over. Secret, little, helpless, ignominious, and in the power of His own creatures, that figure of Jesus Abandoned seems to image forth the invisible God Himself, hiding in a hole of His own creation. So He seems to me to have been in every nation and in every age, and in every department and province of the world. That is His way. That mystery is His portrait, with a strong light upon it. Jesus is a picture of God. The Incarnation is after the same fashion as creation was. God is consistent with Himself in all His mysteries. So also that mystery is a picture of the Blessed Sacrament; for the Blessed Sacrament too, as is always the case with Jesus, is a portrait of God. What then can be more unthoughtful, or indicate a mind less used to the ways of God, than to fancy that the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation is a gratuitous addition to religion, an unnecessary fiction, a prodigious invention, a monstrous imagination, out of keeping with

the rest of God's ways, a thing by itself, and out of harmony with the style of His other works? It is part of an immense system, the conclusion of many divine premises. It is the keystone of creation's arch, and also the apex of that pyramid of creation which runs up and loses itself in the Divine Person of the Eternal Word, and so hangs all things on to God.

Surely a glimpse into this system of God must fill us with unusual reverence. What it comes to is that the whole beauty of creation is in the presence of the Creator, the lives, the hopes, the joys, the possibilities of men simply in the benediction of His compassionate presence. What would the world be but sheer hell, if it were reduced to the three bare necessities of His immensity, in essence, presence, and power? It will increase our reverence to think of this. We shall value every faintest token of God's dear Presence more and more, when we see that the absence of it is no less a misery than hell. Yet how many men live without God in the world, and care not for it, and are happy, all because God is more gracious with them than they know of, and visits them with a sunny presence which they perceive not nor understand! So little is the pain of sense, intensely horrible as it may be, compared with the pain of loss, that hell may be shortly described as the one cavern of creation from which the inexorable majesty of God withdraws all presence, save and except the necessities of His immensity.

Let us put aside the curtain of vindictive fire, and see what this pain of loss is like; I say, what it is like, for it fortunately surpasses human imagination to conceive its dire reality. Suppose that we could see the huge

planets and the ponderous stars whirling their terrific masses with awful, and if it might be so, clamorous velocity, and thundering through the fields of unresisting space with furious gigantic momentum, such as the mighty avalanche most feebly figures, and thus describing, with chafing eccentricities and frightful deflections, their mighty centre-seeking and centre-flying circles, we should behold in the nakedness of its tremendous operations the divine law of gravitation. Thus in like manner should we see the true relations between God and ourselves, the true meaning and worth of His beneficent presence, if we could behold a lost soul at the moment of its final and judicial reprobation, a few moments after its separation from the body and in all the strength of its disembodied vigour and the fierceness of its penal immortality. No beast of the jungle, no chimera of heathen imagination, could be so appalling. No sooner is the impassable bar placed between God and itself than what theologians call the creature's radical love of the Creator breaks out in a perfect tempest of undying efforts. It seeks its centre and it cannot reach it. It bounds up towards God, and is dashed down again. It thrusts and beats against the granite walls of its prison with such incredible force, that the planet must be strong indeed whose equilibrium is not disturbed by the weight of that spiritual violence. Yet the great law of gravitation is stronger still, and the planet swings smoothly through its beautiful ether. Nothing can madden the reason of the disembodied soul, else the view of the desirableness of God and the inefficacious attractions of the glorious Divinity would do so.

Up and down its burning cage the many-facultied and

mightily-intelligenced spirit wastes its excruciating immortality in varying and ever-varying still, always beginning and monotonously completing, like a caged beast upon its iron tether, a threefold movement, which is not three movements successively, but one triple movement all at once. In rage it would fain get at God to seize Him, dethrone Him, murder Him, and destroy Him; in agony it would fain suffocate its own interior thirst for God, which parches and burns it with all the frantic horrors of a perfectly self-possessed frenzy: and in fury it would fain break its tight fetters of gnawing fire which pin down its radical love of the beautiful Sovereign Good, and drag it ever back with cruel wrench from its desperate propension to its Uncreated Centre. In the mingling of these three efforts it lives its life of endless horrors. Portentous as is the vehemence with which it shoots forth its imprecations against God, they fall faint and harmless, far short of His tranquil, song-surrounded Throne.

Four views of its own hideous state revolve around it, like the pictures of some gastly show. One while it sees the million times ten millions genera and species of pains of sense which meet and form a loathsome union with this vast central pain of loss. Another while all the multitude of graces, the countless kind providences, which it has wasted pass before it, and generate that undying worm of remorse of which our Saviour speaks. Then comes a keen but joyless view, a calculation, but only a bankrupt's calculation, of the possibility of gains for ever forfeited, of all the grandeur and ocean-like vastness of the bliss which it has lost. And last of all comes before it the immensity of God, to it so unconsoling and

so unprofitable; it is not a picture, it is only a formless shadow, yet it knows instinctively that it is God. With a cry that should be heard creation through, it rushes upon Him, and it knocks itself, spirit as it is, against material terrors. It clasps the shadow of God, and lo! it embraces keen flames. It runs up to Him, but it has encountered only fearful demons. It leaps the length of its chain after Him, but it has only dashed into an affrighting crowd of lost and cursed souls. Thus is it ever writhing under the sense of being its own executioner. Thus there is not an hour of our summer sunshine, not a moment of our sweet starlight, not a vibration of our moonlit groves, not an undulation of odorous air from our flowerbeds, not a pulse of delicious sound from music or song to us, but that hapless unpitiable soul is ever falling sick afresh of the overwelming sense that all around it is eternal.

And all this is but the absence of God's sweet presence in His own Creation! And the Blessed Sacrament is in a most special sense His Real Presence! Hence the Blessed Sacrament is the very opposite of hell. It is no less than heaven on earth. See how we meet its wonders at every turn, and are continually coming upon some of its blissful functions. God has thrown Himself, His grace, His joy, His presence into it as the last citadel of His love. Let us build our tents beneath its walls, and abide there evermore: for those portals are the happy end of all human pilgrimage. O thou waste land of endless torment and malediction! one sunbeam of God's beautiful presence falling athwart the outer darkness of thine everlasting curse, and it would be lit up into a home of joy and a paradise of peace. O Hidden

Presence! Uncreated Beauty! show Thyself now in this Thy sweetest sacramental hiding-place, show Thyself ever so little to our poor unworthy hearts, and we shall leap forward with longing love and unite ourselves eternally with Thee!

If such be the ways of God, what wonder His glory should rest in such a special manner on the Blessed Sacrament, what wonder it should be itself an endless fountain of fresh glory to His heavenly majesty? Everything that ever was, is, or will be, is only for the glory of God. This is the true simple philosophy of all creation, the one infallible truth of all possible sciences. What is heaven but a pageant of His love, and hell but the chastity of His justice? What is purgatory but the condescension of His patient mercy? How many things are there, kingdoms in the world of nature, and of grace, which seem to exist only for His glory? Such are the inimitable wonders of the Saints, and the waste of beauty in the physical creation: such the mystery of suffering on earth, especially in babes and idiots, such the whole notion of probation, whether of angels or of men, such the public pomp of the universal judgment of those whose dooms are already fixed and their eternal careers begun: such the excessive prerogatives of Mary, and such the sweet human abysses of the Sacred Heart, enclosed as many a time it has been within our own worthless hearts in the mystery of Communion. One half hour of one tabernacle's Sacramental life is more than the worship of all angels and Saints for ever; for it is Jesus the living God. The various acts of worship of the various angelic choirs, the various hearts and souls of saints, glorified and grace-sublimed, straining

through countless ages their intelligence and love, could not so worship God, as the new Host has worshipped Him before yet the priest has raised It for the worship of the faithful. Indeed, the worship He receives from the Blessed Sacrament is the only worship worthy of God in the whole of creation; and it is worthy of Him because it is, so far as worship can be, co-equal and co-extensive with Him. It is a joy to think of it, a delight to fathom it, if only to know afresh what all along we knew, that it was unfathomable. The Blessed Sacrament is sweeter far than sin is hateful; and thus is ever making to the offended Majesty of God a continual, divine, human, and abounding reparation.

Meanwhile, it not only glorifies God of itself, but it is leading, teaching, and enabling us to glorify Him also, imperfectly, yet still so as we could never else have glorified Him. The Blessed Sacrament is to us the doctor of the unity of God. It teaches us His unity in Himself, His unity in Trinity. It illuminates for us the unity of all His works and ways. It manifests Him to us consistently, miraculously, as one and the same at work in matter and spirit, in nature and in grace. And if we have read the Old Testament aright, surely we may confess that above all things the Most High God glories in His unity. Further, the Blessed Sacrament is continually drawing creatures to love God more and more. There is not a function of the Blessed Sacrament, mass, communion, the visit, exposition, procession, benediction, viaticum, the holy sepulchre, but they are each and all powers, attractions, forces, of Divine Love, the varieties of which are a science by themselves. Nay, to bring God and man still more closely together, see! the Flesh

of Jesus has drawn not only His Divine Person into a miraculous mystic state, but also the Father and the Holy Ghost by real and true concomitance. What celestial attraction! So that of God, as well as of angels and of men, are those great words true, that where the Body is, there will the Eagles be gathered together! O Littleness of my Sacramental Lord! what an ocean art Thou of Glory unto God! The feeblest accidents that matter could support, and yet the new residence of the Undivided Trinity, the extremes brought together, and at my priestly word; how plainly must the faith that holds this be a gift divine, how clearly must the love that conceived it be at once all-mighty and all-wise!

Yes! it comes to this,—that God vouchsafing to dwell in the Blessed Sacrament, it must needs be His greatest work of love. O what was Palestine to this! He dwells there as our Father among His children, as our Redeemer to complete His work, as our Sanctifier to continue it, as our Glorifier impatiently anticipating our endless union with Him, and as our Creator, perfecting, finishing, and outstripping in Transubstantiation the most delicate processes of Creation, which without it would be unfinished. Look bravely now into the first dawn, the pearly aurora of Creation. We who have dared to look upon the Vision of the Holy Trinity, may be bold to look at this. See! out of viewless and impalpable Nothing that first instantaneous intellectual Creation, angels streaming forth in endless processions of diversified intelligence; and then those material orbs, in countless kinds, some strewn like gold-dust over sidereal space in fair white galaxies, some hung like clearly swinging lamps along the streets and squares of the vast ethereal city! He who made

them all, and could multiply the work again and again unnumbered times, He, the music of whose speechless voice evoked this splendour and this beauty and this intelligence, who brooded on the deeps of Chaos, who planted Eden, who fashioned Adam, and who in that day was young yet everlasting, is the Same, His whole undivided, ever-blessed Self who is now in the tabernacle, taken captive by His own insatiable love of the creatures whom His mercy made!

BOOK IV.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT A PICTURE OF JESUS

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SECTION I.

THE INCARNATION.

THE Incarnation is as much the world in which we live, as the globe on which we tread, with its earth, air, fire and water, its sun, moon and stars, its animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms. If we look at our souls, their present wants and their eternal expectations, their life, strength, health and maladies, the Incarnation is as indispensable to them, and as indispensable every hour of the day, as the heat and cold, the air and light, are to our natural subsistence. We live and move in the Incarnation. We are what we are, through it. It covers us, underlies us, and is all around us. It is incessantly affecting us in almost numberless ways, both within and without. We cannot get beyond the reach of its blessed influence, even by disbelieving it or dishonouring it. For our heavenly Father has caused the sun of justice, like the natural sun, to shine both on the just and the unjust. Every man owes all that is best, most energetic, and most successful

about him to the Incarnation. It is so bound up with the whole of creation, with nature, grace, and glory, with past, present, and future, with God's behaviour to us and our relations with Him, that it is impossible to extricate the Incarnation from Creation, in the present dispensations of God. Nay, so strikingly true is this that theologians have been found who maintain, not only that the Incarnation flows from Creation, which no one denies, but that if there was to be Creation at all, there must necessarily be the Incarnation also.

The Incarnation is a revelation of the Creator to His creatures of a far more intimate kind than Creation itself. It lights up greater depths of the Divine Perfections; and it illuminates the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, His infinite sanctity, and the identity of His justice and mercy, with a clearness to which the light given by Creation, magnificent and various as it is, cannot compare. Neither is it less wonderful in its illustrations of the works and ways of God outside Himself. Any one of its mysteries teaches us more of God and of His methods than all the world beside. Furthermore it gathers into itself and resumes all the eternal interests of all the souls of men. Hence surely it should be every one's study. There is nothing which any man is so much concerned to know as the Incarnation. Nothing can be to him more directly, or more continually practical: nothing more deeply interesting, if he is interested at all in spiritual things, and is not altogether carnal.

The knowledge of the Incarnation is not a mere matter of scholarship. For it comes by the feasts of the Church and by prayer as well as by reading. True devotion depends in a great measure upon it. The more a man

knows of the mysteries of Jesus the more easy and delightful will the practice of meditation become. His fervour at the various sacred seasons of the Church will increase, and his frequentation of the sacraments become more full of reverence and love. Hence the health, the vigour, and the holiness of the Church are materially benefitted by instructing her children in the theology of the Incarnation. To make Jesus better known is to make Him better loved, and the love of Jesus is the sanctity of His Church. There are two main sources of knowledge regarding the Incarnation, scholastic and mystical theology. Scholastic theology is the mine whence priests and teachers must draw the wisdom which they prepare for the people in just measure and according to their ability to receive it; whereas mystical theology is rather the work of the Holy Ghost in pure and just souls, requiring in ordinary cases a pre-existing foundation of knowledge, gained, either by reading or hearing, from authoritative theology.*

* A very fair and candid Protestant writer, comparing the morals of the eastern and western empires, to the advantage of the former, attributes the superiority of the Greeks in great measure to the *universal* study of theology. "Philosophical and metaphysical speculations had, in the absence of the more active pursuits of political life, been the chief occupation of the higher orders; and when the Christian religion became universal, it gradually directed the whole attention of the educated to theological questions. These studies certainly exercised a favourable influence on the general morality of mankind, and the tone of society was characterized by a purity of manners, and a degree of charitable feeling, which have probably never been surpassed."—*Finlay's Greece under the Romans, page* 175. As several expressions have been used in the course of this work, implying that in these days, *if* physical science is expected to form part of a liberal education, then also the science of theology should enter into it as well, at least up to a certain point, it may not be out

It would be difficult to conceive even a possible science which should open to the human mind more magnificent, more deep, more various, or more elevating treasures of truth and thought than scholastic theology; and among all its fair provinces is there one more fair than the treatise of the Incarnation? It may be said to contain within itself full twenty regions of glorious wisdom, each of them inexhaustible because full of God, exuberant in wisdom, which can cleanse the heart and almost beatify the spirit, as well as occupy and inform the most gigantic intellect of the sons of men. The mere convenience of the Incarnation is the subject of a science. While we enquire even into the possibility of the mystery various questions of immense interest arise before us, as to how the possibility could be known, and by what creatures, and in what way. But the possibility of the Incarnation seems, although untruly, to lead us to infer its absolute necessity, and here theology has to light her brightest lamps and lead us along the silent outskirts of the divine decrees. We next explore the nature of rigorous and perfect satisfaction, and see how far above even an infinite grace or adoption, were we to grant its possibility, is the grace of the Hypostatic Union. The freedom of God's

of place to quote an anecdote of Du Val, doctor of the Sorbonne. He made a retreat, when young, to see if his attraction to the religious life was really from God, and it was made known to him in prayer that he was to remain in the ecclesiastical state. He then asked in what kind of work he was to occupy himself, and God vouchsafed to reply that he was to teach theology; for that he could serve the Church more by that work than by any other, inasmuch as the young ecclesiastics, who learned from him, would propagate his teaching to the multitudes committed to their care. *See the Sketch of Dr. Du Val in Mgr. Dupanloup's new edition of the life of the Blessed Mary of the Incarnation, vol.* i. *p.* 134.

acceptation even of Christ's merits, and the connection between the Incarnation and sin, predestination and the first man, close this first department of its theology. The nature and essence of the Incarnation, the Person assuming, the nature assumed, and its parts, with the causes of the assumption, occupy five more of these bright, but mysterious regions. The grace of Christ, the science of Christ, the power of the Humanity of Christ, the defects (to use the theological term) of His Body and Soul, and the orthodox way of expressing ourselves on all these subjects, are so many separate branches of this divine knowledge. The being or existence of Christ, His will, merit, subjection, prayer, adoption, predestination, priesthood, with the worship due to Him, complete the twenty regions, on each of which volumes have been written, not filled, as they who never read them take for granted, with idle and merely subtle questions, but with profound reasonings and magnificent discoveries and fertile truths, which are a more solid food and a more noble exercise and a more practical study for the enlightened reason, than even the great truths of metaphysics or astronomy. Such is scholastic theology, one fountain of knowledge regarding the Incarnation.

Mystical theology has rather to do with the separate mysteries and various states of our Lord than with the processes of the Incarnation itself. The Holy Spirit discloses to souls of different vocations the secret meanings and graces of particular mysteries and states; and all these lights at prayer, visions, raptures, extasies, and divine locutions, treasured up in the lives of God's chosen servants, are so many contributions to mystical

theology, so far as it is capable of being recorded and studied. But far more is taught to each soul by the operation of the Holy Ghost Himself. This is the living mystical theology, to which none other can compare. For without this there is no truly deep or efficacious knowledge of Jesus. But we must not forget that all mystical theology, which regards our Blessed Lord, must be brought to the test of scholastic theology and abide by its approved decisions, and the living mystical theology even more jealously than the chronicled experiences of the saints, because of its liability to delusion; for the facility and peril of abuse are always in proportion to the real excellence of the thing abused. This is well expressed by M. Olier in his autobiography,* where he says, "I esteem scholastic theology as it deserves, and I acknowledge myself to be greatly indebted to it for the intelligence of our Lord's mysteries, and the support I have received from them. It is true that of itself it cannot fully illuminate them, nor open their real secrets, because these mysteries are hidden by the express order of God, so that no man shall know them to whom He does not reveal them. Theology, drawing its conclusions by reason from the principles of the faith, does not pretend to discover thereby what a divine light can alone disclose."

Now as the Blessed Sacrament is the compendium of Creation, its interpretation, crown, and culminating point, so is it also of the Incarnation. It is the sum of all its wonders, the abridgement of all its revelations. The lamps of scholastic theology group themselves all around it, while it is itself the most operative power of mystical

* Vie. i. 18.

theology; and it is with reference to these two theologies that we must now consider it. Jesus is God; but when we pronounce the word Jesus and the word God, we have different ideas; for the word Jesus implies the Incarnate God, one Person of the Three, with His peculiar Human Life, His grace, and His redemption. Thus as we have studied the Blessed Sacrament already as a picture of God, we have now to study It as a picture of Jesus.

In order to clear the way to our subject, it is necessary to say some little of the different views of the Incarnation which have been taught in the schools; more especially as one particular view has already been assumed as true in many things which have been said in the previous Books, and will often be so assumed in what is to follow, although the main argument does not at all depend upon it. The mystery in the Incarnation which places all the other mysteries, and establishes their harmonies and subordinations, is the predestination of Jesus. But it is not necessary for us to go deeply into that most difficult question here. Suffice it to say, that there are three views of the Incarnation, any one of which, if adopted, will colour the whole of a man's theology, and enable us to divine the side which he will take in a host of other and apparently disconnected questions. I shall state these three views, and the one here assumed to be true at greater length than the others, but without entering into any controversy or noticing any objections. It is sufficient for devotional opinions that they be based on some view freely permitted in the schools, and which authority has never qualified with any sort of censure.

The first view is that taught by Raymund Lully, and since his time by various modern optimists. Admitting

that the Incarnation is not simply and absolutely necessary to God, which could not be asserted without impiety, it maintains that, given the Creation of the world, the Incarnation could not but follow; in other words, God could not decree creation, without at the same time decreeing the Incarnation, because He was bound to decree the best and most perfect kind of creation, and that involves the union of a created nature with an uncreated Person. Malebranche in his system of nature and grace adopts a similar view, through his anxiety to get rid of what he called occasional wills in God; and he pronounces creation to be in a certain sense one indivisible whole with the Incarnate Word. There are many points of view from which this hypothesis is very tempting; but there are objections to it which, without meriting the extreme language of Fénelon, are nevertheless fatal to its claims. The view must be regarded simply as the expression of the wonder and delight of the mind, when it perceives the astonishing and ravishing harmonies and ties, which there are between the Incarnation and Creation. It is an easy thing in theology to mistake convenience for necessity. Theologians have abandoned St. Anselm, teaching that the Incarnation was necessarily decreed when God decreed the permission of man's fall, and even Richard of St. Victor, who said that the Incarnation was necessary to the reparation of the human race.*

* The enthusiasm with which the optimism of Malebranche and Leibnitz was hailed by the world is one of the most poetical incidents in literary history. But in order to understand it, we must have appreciated the weariness and perplexity caused by the Jansenist, Calvinist, and Socinian theories, and the defiance which Bayle gave to Christian theology, and the number of his slaughtered foes which lay round about him. The system of Malebranche, at once

The second view of the Incarnation is that commonly taken by the Thomists. They teach that our Lord not only came principally to save fallen men, in which all agree, but that if it had not been for sin He would never have come at all. His coming was altogether remedial, and He could not have come otherwise, so far as God's present decrees are concerned. This view seems to rest upon a vast amount of Scripture evidence, and upon several congenial expressions in the hymns and offices of the Church. It is plain that the order of predestination, and several questions about grace, sin, and our Blessed Lady, receive implicitly a particular resolution by this view of the Incarnation. Vasquez is the greatest modern exponent of this hypothesis.

Bayle's senior and his survivor, was hailed with acclamation by mankind, as if it were an intellectual deliverance. Fénelon's refutation of it was written when he was young, and was corrected by Bossuet. It is said however, I do not know on what authority, that Bossuet modified his opposition to it afterwards, but it does not seem that Fénelon experienced any such change. Viva draws nearer to this theory than the generality of great theologians. After having said, Deus neque metaphysice, neque physice, (seu ex exigentia propriæ naturæ) necessitatur ad optimum ponendum, he says, Datur in Deo inclinatio, seu moralis necessitas, ad optimum, atque adeo ad Incarnationem ponendam. Necessitas hæc est potius metaphorica: cum non imbibat difficultatem in oppositum; sed solum fundet, judicium prudens de optimo ponendo, et imprudentissimum ac inopinabile de eo non ponendo. *De Incarn. pt.* vi. *disp.* q. 2, *art.* 2. Billuart expresses the more common opinion: Deu non semper facit aut debet facere id, quod est melius, perfectius, &c. convenientius ex parte operis; alias deberet facere mundum perfectiorem, et perfectiorem in infinitum: sed quod suæ voluntati, quæ est fons et regula totius rectitudinis, magis congruit in ordine ad fines quos liberrime sibi constituit. *De Incarn. Diss.* iii. *art.* ii. *sect.* i. For a comparison and contrast of different systems of optimism of Leibnitz and Malebranche, see *Legrand. De Incarnat. Diss.* v. *cap.* 2.

The third view of the Incarnation, and the one assumed throughout this treatise to be true, is the view taken by the Scotists, and by Suarez, and many other theologians both ancient and modern. It teaches, that our Lord came principally to save fallen man, that for this end He came in passible flesh; but that even if Adam had not fallen He would have come, and by Mary, in impassible flesh, that He was predestinated the first-born of creatures before the decree which permitted sin, that the Incarnation was from the first an intentional part of the immense mercy of creation, and did not merely take occasion from sin, which only caused Him to come in the particular way in which He came, and was not the cause of His coming altogether. Those who hold this view understand the passages of Scripture, the Fathers, and the Breviary, as speaking of our Lord's coming in passible flesh. It would be a foolish exaggeration to say that this view is without its difficulties. Indeed, at first sight and in itself, it presents more difficulties than the Thomist view; but the consequences of the latter entangle us in many theological inconveniences from which the former sets us free. It may be added that the definition of the Immaculate Conception is an additional prejudice in favour of the Scotist view. For that beautiful mystery was almost an integral part, or at least a ready consequence, of Franciscan theology; whereas the Thomist system has to make room for the Immaculate Conception with more or less of effort; and this it has been made to do by many Dominican theologians, who have been signal champions of that mystery which is our Lady's great prerogative. This observation is not

the less true, even if it were proved that St. Thomas himself held the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

This last view of the Incarnation runs out into almost every province of theology; and it is therefore desirable to convey some general idea of the grounds on which it rests. Those who hold it dwell very much on the doctrine that Jesus was decreed before all creatures, and therefore before the permission of sin. Thus, we read in Scripture,* I came out of the mouth of the Most High, the first-born before all creatures. And St. Paul, speaking of our Lord, says to the Colossians,† that He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For in Him were all things created in heaven, and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by Him and in Him, and He is before all, and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the Body, the Church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things He may hold the primacy; because in Him, it hath well pleased the Father, that all fulness should dwell, and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself. Much of this language is evidently not applicable to the eternal generation of the Word. So in the eighth chapter of Proverbs where St. Jerome translates from the Hebrew. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways, the Septuagint renders it, The Lord created Me; and the passage ends, I was with Him forming all things, and was delighted every day, playing before Him at all times, playing in the world; and my delights were to be with the children

* Eccles. xxiv. † Ibid. i. 15.

of men. St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Cyril, St. Gregory Nazianzen, and St. Epiphanius have interpreted this passage of the Incarnation. Tertullian, in his book on the Resurrection of the flesh says, That mud, (he is speaking of the creation of Adam,) which then put on the image of the Christ that was to come in the flesh, was not only the work of God, but His pledge. Rupert commenting on the epistle to the Hebrews says, It is to be religiously said and reverently heard, that God created all things because of Christ who was to be crowned with glory and honour. From these and a host of similar authorities, the Scotists, with Suarez and others, particularly Franciscans and Jesuits, consider that it follows that all men came because of Christ, not Christ because of them, that all creation was for Him, and was not only decreed subsequently to His predestination, but for His sole sake.

Their second proof is drawn from our Lord's being the first-begotten and exemplar of the predestinate. Thus, St. Paul says to the Romans,* Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and again to the Ephesians,† Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity, who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself.

It is further attempted to establish this view of the Incarnation by arguments drawn from reason, from the

* Eccles. viii. 29. † Ibid, i. 3.

natural order of things, from the relative value of means and ends, from the grace of the unfallen Adam which is alleged to have been conferred upon him because of Christ, from the Incarnation having, as St. Thomas teaches, been revealed to Adam, who did not lose his faith when he sinned, else the Church would for the time have been extinguished, and from similar grounds, which it would be beside our purpose, and contrary to the character of this treatise, to discuss. The same may be said of certain consequences which seem to flow from the opposite doctrine, and to damage its acceptability. Thus it is urged that, on the other view, Christ was only an "occasioned good," and occasioned moreover by sin, and that this is an unworthy supposition: or again, that Christ would have to rejoice in Adam's sin, because He owes His existence, grace, and glory as man, to it. When St Anselm is attacking those who taught that men were predestinated and created simply to fill the vacant thrones of the fallen angels, he says, If men were only created for the replenishing of the ranks thinned by the fall of the angels, it is plain that if the angels had not fallen from blessedness, men would not have risen to blessedness, and therefore they would have perversely to rejoice in the sin of the angels. Much more strongly, say the Scotists, will the same reasoning apply to Christ, if He only came because of the sin of man.

Again it is said, that if Christ was decreed after us, and because of us, and only to redeem us, these three monstrous consequences follow, first that Christ would owe us a debt of gratitude, secondly that we should in certain respects be more excellent than He, and thirdly, that sin was necessary to His existence. Rupert says.

If according to St. Augustin, it is absurd to say, that if Adam had not sinned, the generations of men would not have existed, as if sin were necessary to their existence, what must we think of that Head and King of all elect angels and men, except that to Him least of all was sin necessary, that He should become man and find the delights of His charity with us?

On the Scotist view therefore the following would be the order of the divine decrees, the order of intention, for there can of course be no order of time with God. First God understood Himself as the Sovereign Good. Secondly, He understood all creatures. Thirdly, He predestinated creatures to grace and glory. Fourthly, He foresaw men falling in Adam. Fifthly, He preordained the Passion of Christ as the remedy for this fall. Thus Christ in the flesh, and all the elect also, were foreseen and destined to grace and glory before the foresight either of sin or of the Passion.*

Both the Thomist and Scotist views of the Incarnation are free opinions in the schools; and I have only dwelt more at length on the last because it is the one I have all along assumed to be true, and because I think Suarez does not succeed in making a harmony of the two: and as I have mainly followed St. Thomas in the other questions† which have been touched upon in this book, it seemed necessary to confess to this somewhat notable exception: more especially as the Blessed Sacrament may be called St. Thomas' own subject, so completely has the

* Scotus. 3, dist. 39, quæs. unic. no. 6.

† With one little exception, respecting the sustaining of the accidents in the Blessed Sacrament, especially the accident of commensurable quantity.

Church embodied his mind on this matter as the best expression of her own, in her definitions and formularies.

It appears as if a very little modification would make both these views true together; inasmuch as they both lay so much stress on the doctrine that our Lord came, as He has come, expressly and principally to redeem mankind from sin, and that consequently a remedial character pervades all His mysteries, both such as have to do with His being our example, and such as have to do with His being our atonement, while the same character is stamped also upon His enactments as our legislator. The Thomist view moreover will by no means allow us to say that redemption from sin was the sole object which God intended in this great mystery. This appears, even while the divines of that school are commenting on the very strong passages of the Fathers upon which they ground their own hypothesis. For they admit that the manifestation of the divine omnipotence, wisdom, and goodness was one end of the Incarnation, and the Headship of the whole Church of angels and men another. Indeed, otherwise the doctrine that our Lord as man is Head of the angels would be fatal to the Thomist hypothesis. The Church is dear to God, says St. Chrysostom; for because of the Church the heavens were stretched out, the sea spread abroad, the air extended over us, and the earth laid in its foundations. For the sake of the Church the sea was divided, the rock cloven, and the manna sent from heaven. For the sake of the Church were the prophets, for the sake of the Church the apostles, yea for the sake of the Church was the Only-Begotten Son of God made man.*

* S. Chrys. Serm. i. de Pentecoste.

Notwithstanding, however, that there is no insurmountable repugnance between the two theories, it must be acknowledged that the attempt Suarez made to reconcile them is generally considered unsuccessful, and also that the opposite solution of so many other questions implicitly contained in each hypothesis makes it appear as if there was a real, deep-lying difference between them. But in truth the range of our vision in such matters is very limited, and reasons are often so evenly balanced, that not unfrequently a peculiar devotional bent is left to decide a question on which the understanding alone would be undecided; and thus different men arrive at different conclusions, not because their bent is devotional only, but because it is peculiar also. Where our holy mother the Church leaves us free, and the cogency of reasonings is inadequate to force upon us a conviction of the mind, what better rule can each man follow than to embrace, with all diffidence and without obstinacy, that opinion which, for any unexplained reasons, enables his particular soul the better to love and worship Jesus and the Most Holy Trinity?

SECTION II.

NATURE, GRACE, AND GLORY.

WHEN we gaze with love and awe and bashful loyalty upon the Blessed Sacrament in His monstrance on the throne, we know that it is Jesus Himself who is behind those thin mysterious veils. Jesus is God and man; but He is especially and pre-eminently present there in His Human Nature. This is the prerogative of the Blessed Sacrament. It is Man abiding with men, to govern and console them. It is God, sweetly and familiarly present,

not as God only, but as God-man. He is finding his "delights with the children of men," and in the same impassible and glorious Flesh in which, according to our view, He would have come among us and been one with us, if Adam had never fallen, and sin been a name and thing unknown upon the earth. Countless are His rights and titles as God, marvellous His uncreated wisdom and glory as the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, and boundless His absolute sovereignty as our Creator, He is there in the monstrance clothed in the seven magnificent rights of His Human Nature, as Mary's Son, as Head of the Church, as Prophet, Priest, King, Owner of all temporal things, and Judge of angels and men. Such are the joys and honours of His Sacred Humanity, which He, the living Lord, is wearing at all hours in His great Sacrament of love.

It is a joy to Him to be the Son of the Mother of His own eternal choice, so sinless and so pure, and by the abundance of His own gifts so like Himself, and in her solitary pre-eminence of an Immaculate Conception redeemed by His Precious Blood. It is a joy to Him to be Head of the Church, the Head of Angels and of men, ruling the one in a nature inferior to their own, and meriting for the other in their very own nature, and making a unity of all intellectual creatures, save those who by their own perversity have fallen from Him and are lost. He is our Prophet; for He gives us laws, and teaches us wisdom, and reads our hearts, and foretells our secret future. He is our King; and there is no potentate on earth, emperor or king, prince or republican president, but rules in His Name, and with His delegated* authority, not as God only, but in His universal dominion

* Some theologians would say "permitted" rather than "delegated."

as the Son of Man. He is our Priest, for He laid down His life once for us in the bloody Sacrifice of Calvary, and renews that very sacrifice ten thousand times a day, in the unbloody mysteries of the altar. He is the Owner of all temporal things, according to the promise made Him in the Psalms, that He should have the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. There is no property, personal or real, inherited or acquired, by whatever right, title, or tenure held, which is not His as Man, apart from His absolute possession as Creator. All other ownerships are simply permissions, stewardships, delegations, from Him. He is our Judge also; He judged His Mother, not as her God, but as her Son. He will judge the angels, not as God, nor as an angel, but as man; and He judges us not as God but as Man. From the moment of His Conception, say some theologians, or from the moment of His Resurrection, as others say, every soul of man that died was judged by Him in His Human Nature. And it is both our joy and His, that to Him as Man the dread magnificence of judicial power should be thus consigned. O that we could admire and worship His Sacred Humanity according to its deserts! Verily there is no pomp but that of a believing and loving Heart, which pays welcome or respectful court to this Sacramental King.

When we gaze therefore upon the white robes of the Immaculate King, the lights and flowers of the sanctuary seem to fade away, and there open before the eyes of faith interminable regions of various splendour and consummate beauty, over which as Man He is at this moment wielding His far-reaching sceptre of dominion. One after another we seem to behold the three immense kingdoms of nature, grace, and glory, and the pre-eminence which belongs to the Sacred Humanity in each of them.

All the provinces of nature are His and exist because of Him. The diversified inanimate matter which composes, adorns, and surrounds the earth, and suns, and moons, and stars, and planets, with all its mysteries and enormous forces, its hidden secrets or its open splendour, is all for Jesus. It was created for Him, and with a view to Him, and in some way modelled upon Him, and marked with His seal, and is His property in right of the created nature which He has so admirably wedded to the Divine. Doubtless if our weak-eyed science could penetrate so deeply into things, we should see with what astonishing fitness and truth all matter, in every shape, under the agency of every force, the direction of every law, and the convulsions of every catastrophe, had reference to the Incarnate Word, and could be known as His, in like manner as the sheep upon the mountains are known by the owner's mark upon their fleeces. There have been theologians who have gone so far as to teach that our Lord in His Humanity was the Head of all natural things, and merited for them their creation and conversation. But this is surely an exaggeration, which modern theologians almost unanimously reject. Headship is something more than ownership, and cannot be applied to our Blessed Lord in the theological sense, except with reference to angels and men. What is true of His pre-eminence over inanimate matter, is much more so in the case of the animal creation; all were for Him, and are as they are because of Him; and His driving the swine into the sea was a use of His ownership, and His command to the fish to bring Peter the tribute money was an instance of His pre-eminence. In like manner, as His saints advance in holiness and in

likeness to Himself, the animals obey their words, revere their sanctity, and minister to their wants.

When we come to human nature, Adam himself was but a copy of the predestinated Humanity of Jesus. The delights of the Eternal Word were especially with the children of men before the foundation of the world. The Blessed Sacrament has the same nature as ourselves, a Human Body and a Human Soul, taken from an immaculate but a purely human Mother. Our Lord's presence in the Blessed Sacrament is peculiarly the presence of His Human Nature; and therein, to repeat, He is the Son of Mary, the Head of the Church, our Prophet, Priest, and King, the Owner of all temporal things, and the Judge of angels and men. Men are His own family; and He belongs to them and they to Him in such manifold and incomparable ways as pass our power to tell. He did not take upon Himself the nature of angels; yet He is their Head, their mystical, though not their natural Head. They were created because of Him, and to be a court to Himself and His sinless Mother. Even in His Human Nature He illuminates their various choirs, as St. Denys tells us. Nay more than this, to side with Suarez against Vasquez, though He did not redeem the angels, for they needed no redemption, and He assumed not angelic nature, I believe there is not a grace amid their countless graces, nor a glory amid their resplendent glories, which He did not merit for them, and which was not conferred upon them for His foreseen merits. Most theologians agree that the Incarnation was revealed to the angels, and that they had the faith of Christ; and when the holy angels stood, while their brethren fell, some say it was the refusal to worship an inferior nature united to the Person of the Word which

caused their fall; and certainly when St. Michael and his angels drove Lucifer from heaven, as it is said in the Apocalypse, they overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb.

Thus all nature, angelic, human, brute and inanimate, is gathered to the feet of the Sacred Humanity of Jesus, the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. The Blessed Sacrament is the King of nature, and the government is upon His shoulder, and His Name shall be called Wonderful, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace; and His empire shall be multiplied, and of His peace there shall be no end. And what shall I say more but that one other truth in which is our beatitude? With unutterable joy, with a complacency so worshipful and vast, a jubilee so inconceivably above all natural raptures, the Person of the Word has united this Sacred Humanity to the Divine Nature in Himself; so that that Human Nature is anointed and flooded with the torrents and abysses of uncreated perfections; and creation enters in beneath the veil, and the Creator has a created Nature, and takes intimate part in His own Creation. And there in the Blessed Sacrament is the actual living accomplishment of that tremendous mystery, the source of all our hopes, the fountain of all our joy, the eternal blessedness of every elect soul of man. O what should we be, if God were not made Man? If the sun fell from the heavens, it were less dismal ruin than if Jesus had never been, if the Word had never assumed our human nature to His Divine. How is it we can ever distract ourselves to think of earthly things? Are not all thoughts gathered into this one thought? Do not all lights go out in this light? What are all truths but pale satellites to this, shining only with a borrowed

radiance from the Word made Flesh, the light that lighteth every man that is born into the world? All worship therefore be to the King of nature, dwelling amid His subjects in the lowly guise of the Sacramental Veils!

If we turn from the manifold domains of nature, and look over the vast realms of grace, still more wonderful will seem the pre-eminence of that Sacred Humanity, which lives with us in the Blessed Sacrament. For so completely is Jesus the sole fountain of all grace that ever was, or is, or will be, that the liberality of God has never conferred a single one on angel or man, before the Incarnation or after it, without respect to the Incarnate Word. Of His fulness we have all received. So could the angels say, before yet the first sun had dawned on the rivers of Eden. So must the wandering multitudes of earth's sin-stricken exiles say at this hour, and at the day of doom, and in the immutable enjoyment of their immortal bliss. When we look at the Blessed Sacrament we behold the fountain of all the grace which has ever inundated the creation of God.

Many an unkindly thought which foolish men think of God would be rebuked almost before it could rise, if we remembered, that, glorious and gifted as were the unfallen natures of angels and men, the creation of both those reasonable creatures resulted in a state of grace, and not in a state of nature. They were created not only with a nature all beautiful, and orderly, and capacious, and powerful, and good, but superadded to their nature, and coeval with it, was a glorious participation of the Divine Nature which we call sanctifying grace, which is either love itself or brings love inseparably in its train. Faultless as His creations were, God left neither

of them to themselves. Weakness attaches to the very essence of a finite created spirit, and He brought them forth therefore in a higher state than their mightiest efforts ever could have merited for them. They were created and sanctified at once. The Immaculate Conception of our dearest Lady is a specimen of those primal creations, made like to them by the new grace of redemption, which the fall had rendered needful. But the mercy, that creation was in a state of grace rather than in a state of nature, was due to Jesus. It was the work of the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Creation itself, both in respect of nature and of grace, takes root in the excellent and supereminent predestination of Jesus.

Consider the immense multitudes of the angels, with all their hierarchies, choirs, and species, and calculate the oceans of divine grace which have deluged their beatified spirits. Their mighty intelligences, their deep serene affections, their vast fiery zeal! how they must have drunk in torrents of grace, as the thirsty earth drinks in the thunder-shower of the torrid autumn! Yet they were filled, and to overflowing, and were inebriated with their abundance. Some theologians say that the grace of each angel is separate and different from the grace of the rest; so that the kinds of herbs and flowers on earth are but the faintest shadows of the diversity of the angelic graces. If each single leaf of the crowded forests of earth's historical five thousand summers were a separate kind, it would hardly represent the multitude of those celestial graces. The heavenly prince, our own Guardian, who is at our sides this moment, is a very world of grace in himself; and who can speak of Michael, of Gabriel, of Raphael, and the other five that stand alway before the

Throne of God? Try to fathom this universe of angelic grace, in its kind, its degree, its variety; and you will sink down in sheer amazement, and a silence that will hardly dare to think. Place yourself in heaven at the awful moment of the angelic probation; look at the two-thirds of its populous empire whose eternity of glory is in that moment immutably secured. What positive floods of grace with their exuberant tides are at that instant flowing majestically into their open spirits! What floods are striking on the unopened spirits of the rest, and are breaking against them, and falling back on God in streams of light and glory and resplendent justice, as the billow breaks upon a rock and bathes it in showers of starry spray! Look at the Blessed Sacrament: all that grace was from the foresight of the Sacred Human Heart that is beating behind those veils. O King of Angels! who can tell Thy worth? The angels round Thy tabernacle know how far too short eternity will prove, to exhaust the hymns, that should enumerate the wonders of Thy Sacrament of Love!

Adam, the newly created master of the Eden God Himself had planted, was bright with a thousand gifts. The radiant panoply of his original justice is almost too bright for eyes so weak as ours. But all was from Jesus, all from the Incarnate Word, all from the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. All the glory which Adam enjoys now in heaven is from the merits of Christ. It is of faith. Every degree therefore of grace, and all the merits to which the degrees of glory correspond, are from His merits. Even they, who teach that Adam's merits in a state of innocence were from the gift of the sole liberality of God, and not from Jesus, admit that, when lost by the fall, they were vivified by the grace of Christ.

and are now rewarded only for His merits. Again, all the merits of Adam in a state of innocence were the effects of his predestination; and that was, as we have seen, posterior and subordinate to the predestination of Jesus, which is the exemplar of all predestination. And again, Tertullian, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Epiphanius, and St. Bernard tell us, and the followers of Vasquez admit it, that the Incarnation was revealed to Adam in a state of innocence, so that, as the angels had, so Adam had the faith of Christ before the fall, and lost not the faith in his fall; and Hurtado himself, arguing against the Scotist view of the Incarnation, admits that this revelation to Adam in a state of innocence is undoubted, and that it did not reveal the Incarnate Lord as a Redeemer, because the occasion of redemption had not yet come in Adam's sin. Surely we may well deny to the first Adam any grace which was not from the merits of Him who condescends to be styled the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven.

There is the grace which expels from the soul original sin, both as to its guilt and punishment; and which the sacrament of baptism applies, even before the use of reason dawns. There is the grace by which men repent of mortal sin and are forgiven; and though they fall many times, yet still repent and are forgiven again. There is the grace, which is a participation of the Divine Nature, and whereby we are the friends of God and the heirs of heaven; and there is the grace, which is an impulse of the Divine Will, which illuminates our minds and bends our wills. Even outside the Church there is exciting grace, pouring its light into the intellect, not only on great occasions, but almost always while reason is awake and clear, enticing us to good, and beguiling us

from evil. There is the grace whereby men hate venial sin more than death, and repent of it when they fall. There is the special grace by which some souls are said to have been preserved through life from all wilful venial sin, a grace attributed to Jeremias, St. John the Baptist, and St. Joseph. There is the further grace of being sanctified in the womb, and so being saints before birth, as is said of Jeremias and the Baptist. There is the solitary star-like grace of our Mother's Immaculate Conception, which leads us up at once to the confines of the immeasurable grace of Jesus Himself. And there is not one of all these graces, from the Creation of the world till now, which has not in its time come from Jesus, as God-Man, or which is not streaming now from that Blessed Sacrament. Over all this beautiful and compassionate kingdom He reigns supreme, the most blessedly indulgent Potentate that man's fondest desires could have conceived.

Who is not full of joy when a feast of our Lady comes, those bright days that strew the year with stars? It is as if the Church called us to leave the noise and distraction of the world, and walk by the shores of some calm majestic lake, in whose unruffled and translucent depths are imaged the mountains of Divine Perfection. We remember the various splendours of the angelic kingdom; and we remember how that in the one first moment of her Immaculate Conception the imperial Mother of God was adorned with greater graces and shone with greater merits than all the angels put together, were they to add their merits into one for a million years. If we do the sum of her grace and merits by the arithmetic of Suarez, for which that saintly theologian was thanked by Mary herself, how far beyond the expression of our figures has

the sum advanced when fifteen years of moments, each moment with the full use of reason, each moment, even of slumber, meriting on a gigantic scale, are fully accomplished! To our eyes she is almost lost in the light of grace. We can hardly make a picture of what she was like as a Jewish woman of royal birth. You may measure her grace by the marvel of her divine tranquillity under the visitation now about to come. The jubilant ocean of Uncreated Love rose like a cloud, and hung with His deluge of graces and gifts over the kneeling maiden. His angel went before Him, and He overshadowed the soul and body of Mary, while He waited for her sweet word. In that shadow no created eye could see her. Her word was hardly spoken, fleeting away on the silence of the swift night, but the Eternal Word was incarnate in her ever-blessed womb. What is Mary now, compared with what she was before? Like an inland sea girt round with the mountains of God; or rather herself compassing the Incomprehensible and Illimitable, fifteen years older than the Eternal, and the Eternal's Mother. Why do you weep, Christian soul? It is because there is no prayer and no thanksgiving but tears, when we think of the Incarnation. Each mystery of Jesus and Mary is so touching, that no tale of earthly joy or woe is half so pathetic; but the tenderest and most overwhelming of all is the unspeakable mystery of the Incarnation itself. The Annunciation is the hardest feast in the year to keep as it should be kept.

Now for our arithmetic again. We have the sum of three-and-thirty years to do, and such years! We have Bethlehem, Egypt, Nazareth, the sea of Tiberias, the mountain and the plain, Jerusalem, Bethany, Olivet, and

Calvary, to add together and cast up. When Jesus ascended into heaven, Mary had become our Mother as well as His; and what can be said of her accumulated graces and merits, except that it was a miracle she still remained the same Mary, and a lowly dweller upon earth, so unutterable had been the torrent-like influxes of all the communicable excellencies of God, which had poured into her soul and mind and flesh for now well nigh half a century of human years. There was nothing like her among creatures. She herself was like nothing but the Most Holy Trinity, who is virginal and yet prolific. She has need now to say to our admiring love, what Jesus said to the disciples after His Resurrection, Handle me and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and blood, as ye see me have! Yes! there are the beatings of her Immaculate Heart, the accents of a voice reminding us of the tones of Jesus, the tones of the voice that will pronounce our endless doom. There is the mingled look of joy and sadness, of triumph and patient expectation, in her human eye. She can feel pain; she has to die; she will be judged. You see she is still one of ourselves.

The day of Pentecost is come. O Eternal Spirit! what canst Thou give her, which Thou hast not given her heretofore? She is full to overflowing with the plentitude of grace. But the mighty Wind that will not be stayed rushes round her, shaking the strong temple to its huge foundations; and tongues of fire fall like a shower of snow-flakes into the very depths of her capacious soul. It is a moment only to be compared to the Immaculate Conception and the Incarnation. Yet, where is the theologian who will express for us in sober and intelligible words what happened to Mary in that her third sanctification? Let it pass. She remained Mary

still. That is all we know. She was queen of the apostles and nurse of the infant church. Do the sum of fifteen more years, and add to the manifold virtues of each moment an intensity of patience, of patient absence from her Son, which outdid, each instant, all the accumulated endurance of the Arabian Job. Is not the death-bed often a revolution in the soul, and of all men most particularly so to saints? What was it to Mary when she died of divine love, dissolved at last like sweetest frankincense in the fire which had burned around her and within her unconsumingly these three-and-sixty years? From all the quarters of the globe the apostles were gathered round their dying queen, and gazed astonished at this last marvel of her grace. Who can doubt that the graces and merits of her death-bed only were far beyond the collective excellencies both of angels and of men? And when she stood before her Judge, who was her Son as well, when the commandments and the counsels were applied as tests and measures to her soul, when she had not one sin whereof to be accused, and yet threw herself more utterly on redeeming mercy, than ever judged creature did before or since, what a resplendent universe of grace she was in her own single self! Yet what was it all but one single splendour shed around her from her Son? When the mountain uprises in the clear sunshine, beautiful, well-edged, and fair, it steals nothing from the sun, and its leagues of radiant land and rock and wood and water are no drain upon the solar fountains of beautifying light. So was it with Mary and her Son. O Blessed Sacrament! and Thou art so near, Thou fountain of immortal grace! Thou art there who did all this to Mary! And I have held Thee in my hand, O Body of Jesus, O soul of the

Incarnate Word, O Son of Mary, O God made Man! And I fainted not! I held Thee whom Mary compassed; while thou didst enclose the nothingness of us both within Thy bewildering incomprehensibility!

If it may be reverently said that Malpighi's maxim, *Nature exists entire in leasts*, is true, in the highest and most transcendental sense, of the Blessed Sacrament, may we not also say that the whole world of grace is there as well? From that Blessed Sacrament we have seen radiating forth all the vast regions of angelic holiness, all the gifts of Adam and his race, and the created immensity of the Immaculate Mother's sanctity. Nay, His grace runs over and abounds upon the ungracious. Sinners are struggling against God in a very sea of grace, which blessedly impedes their movements, and quenches the fire of their malice, and makes their hearts happier and gentler than they would have them to be themselves. Long ago have the saints noticed how fires and plagues and wars and earthquakes and pestilences had been bridled by the Sacrifice of the Mass, and were at once fewer in number and less disastrous in their ruin than they were wont to be: while the same Sacred Humanity is ever pouring over the wounds of earth's miseries oils and balms of miracles, and healings, and revelations, and almsgivings, and heroisms of evangelic charity. The Eternal Father sees the world through the Blessed Sacrament, and mercy blesses where justice must have else prolonged the ancient malediction. The very furnaces of hell are cooled seven times lower than their due, because of the Incarnation, so that even there the Blessed Sacrament has a kind of empire, and the rebel fiend and perverse impenitent suffer less than condignity requires O Adorable Host! and has Thy mercy strayed

so far as there, like a sunbeam wandering with its gladness into the murderer's cell? What shall we then do, who at least are not there yet, but bask in the beams of Thine unclouded mercy, and lay down all anxious fears in the embrace of Thy compassion?

Most Holy Sacrament! misery is good for earth, and pain is the healing of souls. Yet there is one misery, one pain, which is at once so grievous and has so much to do with Thee, that we should never come into Thy presence without asking for it to be lightened all over the earth. It is, that they who love Thee should be tempted to disbelieve Thee, that they who have given up all for Thee, a cheap and joyous sacrifice, should have that most terrific of Thy rewards, temptations against faith in Thy sacramental love. Poor hearts! I weep to think of them. The light of the world is to them Egyptian darkness, and the sweetness of the world has turned bitter: consolation is mockery to them, and their Saviour has unvested Himself of the familiar whiteness of His modest accidents and has put on the garment of the Destroyer. Has earth another pain like this? Their mind is ever giving the lie to their hearts. The earth under their feet is as iron, and the heavens above them riveted with roughest brass. And yet, O most gentle Sacrament! how Thou dost love them, and how acceptable to Thee is the compulsion of their dry, dutiful devotion! If the vitality of self-love is so tenacious in their souls that no other rack but this has power to stretch its contracted sinews and to tear it limb by limb, then Lord! Thou wilt turn it gently, and not beyond their power to bear. But speak kind words the while, and invite those most often to communion, who never can

see Thee in Thy sweet Sacrament but they are fain to cry out in anguish, Lord! I believe; help Thou mine unbelief. It must be their hope, as it is our trust, that He who predestinated them, will strengthen the vessels of His own election, and reserve them for those great graces which are laid up in store at last for souls that are tempted with this needful yet horrible temptation. Faint not! sadly yet mercifully visited souls! Fear not, little flock, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom in the end. Was not Joseph tempted about Mary and her Son and the great mystery of the Incarnation, after a like fashion with yourselves? And do you not remember the blessings which the dying Israel left to the first Joseph, "the blessings of heaven above, with the blessings of the deep that lieth beneath, with the blessings of the breasts and of the womb?"* And how beautifully is it said afterwards,† and for gentle suffering souls what exquisite consolation, "Of the race of Juda, who was the strongest among his brethren came the princess; but the first birthright was accounted to Joseph!"

But we have not traversed yet the whole of this kingdom of grace. We have seen what realms of grace have as it were issued for the benefit of others from the Sacred Humanity; we have now to see the grace of that blessed Humanity itself. Who can declare the grace of Christ? For in what conventional language shall we express it, by what measure mete it out, according to what standards compare it, and with what instruments take its altitude? We may weigh the huge sun in our scales, and ascertain his bulk: but divine theology herself can give us but a wide, misty, hill-top view of the grace of Jesus, like a desert landscape to which we know that the horizon is

* Genesis, xlix. † I. Paralipomenon, v

but an imaginary bound. But let us fix our eyes upon the Blessed Sacrament, and feast them on His supernatural littleness, and then name the abysses, one deepening after another, which that littleness contains and compasses.

The created Soul that is living there, assumed by the Person of the Eternal Word, was anointed and penetrated through and through by the Divinity Itself. It is sanctified not merely by its union with the Godhead, still less by habitual grace, but formally by the Godhead Itself; so that no words can express the measure of its sanctification. In the schools this is called the Grace of the Hypostatic Union. The Soul of Jesus is so sanctified by the Deity formally, that if the Personality of the Word could in imagination be separated from the Divinity, the Soul would be sanctified utterly by that Personality, or by each separate one of the Divine Attributes, if in truth they were separable, because of the substantial union of the Sacred Humanity with the Divine Person of the Word.

Besides this Grace of Union there is in the Soul of Jesus immense habitual grace of the same nature as that which sanctifies all just men; and this has been in it from the first moment of its creation, because in that first instant it was blessed with the Beatific Vision and loved God supernaturally. Yet that beautiful Soul in the Blessed Sacrament needed not this habitual grace either to make it dear and acceptable to God and holy in His sight, or to give an infinite value to its works an enable it to merit, not only congruously, but condignly. For both these results the superior and ineffable grace of union had already secured. It enjoyed this habitual grace that it might be holy and adorned with every kind of sanctity; and because the Soul of Christ was above all souls adapted to receive it, and because the sanctity

of habitual grace which was to adorn all other just souls was to be simply derived from His. Nay, it was not to Him, as it is to us, a grace of adoption; for he who is without is adopted, not He who is within, as was our Blessed Lord. Moreover this habitual grace was needed in the Soul of Christ, that by its means He might elicit connaturally supernatural acts of the love of God. The great doctors of the Church discuss if the habitual grace of the Soul of Christ was infinite. So far as intensity is concerned, it might have been so, if so God had pleased; but it was not needed, and its infinity would not even have conduced to make the operations of His Sacred Humanity infinitely meritorious. The grace of union alone could do so, and had already done it. Yet, relatively and in a certain sense, His habitual grace was infinite, because it was the principle of an infinite work, not according to the infinity of dignity, but because it substantially elicited by charity His love of God and His other virtues; and in this sense every virtue in the Sacred Humanity is relatively infinite.

Some theologians have maintained that the habitual grace of the Soul of Jesus could not be increased even by the absolute power of God; because it was conferred upon Him in the highest degree of which either grace itself or a created soul are capable. But others maintain the affirmative, not as wishing to derogate from the grace of Christ, but some because they do not believe our Lord's habitual grace to be in fact infinite, and others because they dare place no such limitation to divine omnipotence. Nay, they will not allow that a mere creature might not receive habitual grace by God's absolute power in like measure with our Lord's. Nevertheless it is impossible for any mere creature, even by absolute

power, to equal the sanctity of Jesus, because infinite infinities of the grace of adoption could never reach the unutterable grace of union. Moreover this habitual grace of our Blessed Lord does not necessarily arise from the Hypostatic Union; and it is connatural to His blessed Soul.

Actual grace is not a participation of the Divine Nature, but an impulse of the Divine Will, and it would seem at first sight, as if the Soul of Jesus would not have actual grace. But as His Human Nature required the ordinary concurrence of God, which all creatures require, in order to discharge its natural functions, so was He pleased to need for His Soul the impulses of actual grace in order to the free supernatural operations which belonged to His Soul while He was a Viator as well as a Comprehensor. The holy thoughts of exciting grace, which move the understanding, and the assisting grace which bends the will to the acts which the illuminated understanding commands, were both in Him. As He vouchsafed not to allow the grace of union to do the work of habitual grace without that grace, so neither was it His will that it should supersede the excitation and assistance of transient actual grace.* All grace was to be in Him. I am using dry words; but I dare not depart from them.

All grace was in Jesus. What then shall we give of our own to the Blessed Sacrament which was not in His own Soul while He was on earth? The worship of our

* See Frassen. De Incarnat. Tract. i. Disp. i. Art. 2. Sect. i. Ques. iii. Hurtado distinguishes the operation of actual grace as illuminating the mind and as moving the will; and admits our Lord's actual grace in the latter case, and denies it in the former, as inconsistent with His infused science. Disp. vii. Difficult. ix.

faith; for that one theological virtue was not, could not be, in Him. Neither a pious affection towards believing,† nor a habit of believing, if in truth such a habit there be, were in His Soul. And if ever there were hope in Him, it could be but hope of the future glory of His Resurrection. Of love why need we speak; for He was love itself, and His name was love. Of the moral virtues, all were in perfection in His Soul, except those whose acts are inconsistent with a state of union and beatitude, such as penance and some others: and those, which of their own nature are only acquired by their own acts, were infused into Him at the moment of Conception. The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, even the gift of fear, adorned His Soul beyond all words, together with the miraculous gifts of gratuitous grace, even that of prophecy, which His clear Beatific Vision did not hinder.

Look once more at the Blessed Sacrament and think of all this plenitude of grace. We have seen His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. O beautiful Human Soul, through Thy Union with the Word at once beatified and beatifying! Thou art full of grace, not as Thy Mother or any creature, but simply, and absolutely, and divinely. Full of grace because full of all virtues and all gifts of grace which were not incompatible with the excess of Thine exaltation. Full of grace because full of the Divinity. Full of grace because of the fountain-head of all grace. Full of grace because as it were infinite in the intensity and operation of habitual grace. Full of grace because of the copiousness, exuberance, and fertility of each grace that was in Thee!

† I have followed Hurtado in taking the negative side on this question. Suarez affirms it. De Lugo leaves it open.

Let us call to mind all we have ever read of the lives of the saints. How enormous were their graces, how astonishing the heroism of their actions, how magnificent the perpetual youth of their perseverance! And how different they were, one from another. Yet all of them collectively would have been a thousand times more marvellous if they could have had amongst them one millionth part of the grace that was in the Sacred Humanity of Jesus. O then if to have spoken with Mary, to have helped Joseph, to have had Peter's blessing, and to have been taught lessons by Paul, were a privilege, one and all, great enough to have gilded a whole life of slow martyrdom, what is it to have Jesus with us, His Sacred Humanity within our reach, lifted up to bless us, and almost touching us, nay at Communion resting on our tongues as on His Mother's lap, and going down into our hearts to unite Himself with us in the closest tie of mystical union?

But this is not all which may be said of His grace. There is the grace of headship which concerns us most of all. He whom we see in the monstrance is Head of the Church, and that not as God, but as Man; and this is of faith. From Him flows into the Church its whole spiritual life, together with the plenitude of His life-giving merits. It is by that influx that you and I live and love God and please Him day by day, and hour by hour. The blood in our veins is much to us; but it is nothing to that influx of Christ our Head. Yet though the Blessed Sacrament is the Head of His Church, He is not a member of it; for we can return to Him no life nor vital energy, in return for the all in all which He is ever pouring into us. O look at that Veiled Redeemer, and bless a thousand times the beneficence of His Headship

over all. He is Head of the blessed; for at this moment He is pouring every motion of glory and every thrill of beatific joy into their countless souls. He is Head of the just on earth; for He is the life-blood of their grace at this instant, wheresoever they dwell. He is the Head of believers in sin; for the life of faith which they live is from Him, and every remnant and relic of supernatural health which is left about them. He is head of the unbelievers, baptized or unbaptized; for He is communicating to all of them various auxiliaries of grace and motions of God, though not with the vitality wherewith He is Head of those who live the life of faith and grace. Of all in their mother's wombs He is the Head by right, and will one day be the gracious Head in act. Of the reprobate alone He is in no sense Head, in His Human Nature; for they are the one withered portion of creation, and between Him and them no vital union can exist. In this same Human Nature He is Head of the angels, illuminating and ruling all; and He was no less Head of Adam and Eve in their state of innocence; for their life of faith and grace was but the influx of His abounding and foreseen merits.

St. Bonaventure and some other theologians hold that this grace of Headship is in our Blessed Lord simply the same thing as His habitual grace. Vasquez, Suarez, and St. Thomas, as I think he should be interpreted, affirm on the contrary that our Lord is Head of the Church by reason of the grace of union. This seems the more true opinion. Nevertheless the grace of Headship is evidently connected with His habitual grace, as it was the principle by which He merited for others.

O how each new truth as it comes out from amongst the difficulties of theology, and we are enabled to master

it, makes us send look after look of more ardent love to the monstrance, and its dear Inmate, our Saviour, our Brother, and our God! How can there ever be gloom again in our minds, since He who is the light of the world has humbled Himself to the darkness of our tabernacles? Yes, we may well gaze upon Him. He is the Head of the Church, so the Head that no creature can be its Head in the same sense as He. Theologians here observe, what is of no trifling importance. Satan's headship for evil is no parallel to the Headship of Christ for good. It is an external headship, causing evil in angels and men, not by an interior influx, like the communication of the grace of Jesus, but by government, administration, malice, example, and persuasion; and the future headship of Antichrist is only a human* derivation from the demoniacal headship of Lucifer. Thus there is no comparison nor contrast between Christ and Satan in respect to headship. The heavenly counterpart of Satan's headship, as Hurtado has observed, is the headship of the pope, which is external, and answers on the side of God and truth to what Satan's is on the side of falsehood and sin. So that the combat of the Church is no duel between the Blessed Sacrament and Satan; but between the fallen angel and Christ's Vicar upon earth, the Sovereign Pontiff, and so will it continue to be when the persecution of Antichrist shall come: just as the old combat in heaven was not between God and Lucifer, but between Michael and Lucifer, the same Michael who is piously believed to be always the guardian angel of the

* Hurtado, De Incarn. disp. vii. Difficult. xxv. Quæ sit gratia capitis in Christo? Not that Antichrist will be an incarnate demon, an opinion which Vasquez refutes, pars i. disp. clxxxiv.

reigning pontiff. Jesus the Head has delegated to His earthly Vicar the task of quelling Satan, and chaining within appointed bounds the fury of the rebel fiend, and all insurgencies of the evil principle. Upon the shoulders of the aged and the outworn and the weak, as the world counts such things, our Lord has laid the government, that each defeat of Satan may be more opprobrious, and that we may learn that no service is so unmistakeably for God as that which is at the same time loyalty, obedience, and love to the Holy See.

Such is the wonderful kingdom of grace, coeval with creation, over which Jesus in His Human Nature reigns the undisputed king, and the second of the three kingdoms which He is ruling at this moment from the monstrance, as erewhile He ruled the world from Mary's womb. How calm and strange all is above the altar around His sacramental throne! The very air seems filled with some great presence, burdened with some weighty secret, entranced by some unseen power. The garish light of day is excluded from the sanctuary. The pictures of the saints are veiled, as the stars hide themselves down in the blue deeps of ether when the sun shines. Men are silent, or deepen the silence by speaking in timid whispers. The tapers are wasting away at His Feet, like loving souls. The flowers shed their odours on the warm air, as if to make an atmosphere of Eden around their King. And there, behind those veils, is the Soul that holds all those abysses of grace, there is that living union of God and Man, there are the Five glorious wounds, whose bright scars are the unspoken eloquence of the Sacred Heart, there is Mary's Son, and Adam's Saviour. One who knew me from all eternity and loved me, and made me, and redeemed me, and will

one day judge me, more indulgently I believe than even my own mother could do, who saw no evil in the child of her foolish love. What shall I ask of Him? Shall I be so close to the fountain of grace, and not drink of its abundance? Thy kingdom come! O King of grace, Head of the Church! let there be no corner in all Thy vast dominions where Thy royal rights are less disputed than in our generous and loving hearts. If they that have sinned much love much, oh what should our love be like? But the wind is chill, and the world is wintry, and our hearts wax cold. Let us nestle closer to the King of grace, and evermore closer still, and warm ourselves at the fires of the Sacred Heart in this Blessed Sacrament. Yet not as Peter warmed himself at that other high priest's fire, to lose His courage and deny his Master afterwards. Any cold were better far than that. But alas! this very mystery is the spot men choose most often to wound Him with a treacherous kiss, the kiss of a cold heart and an unloving service. It is an awful thing to be so near Jesus, because of the mere chance of being a Judas. Gaze on, pious souls, gaze on; drink your fill of love in this adorable Sacrament, but remember, it is always true of God, it is most of all true of our Sacramental God, that he who would intensely love must also intensely fear.

It is through these two kingdoms of nature and grace that we are travelling now to that third kingdom of glory, which alone is our true home. It is not that nature or grace will be left behind, as if they were merely transient things. It is only that their imperfections will fall away from them. Grace itself will mount into glory, and it is nature which will be glorified. But who shall describe this third kingdom of the Blessed Sacrament? Is it not

said that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor man's heart conceived, the beatific joys of that celestial realm? That Human Nature, which is especially present in the Blessed Sacrament, is at this moment, while we are gazing on the littleness of its mysterious disguise, worshipped amid shouts and hymns of joy, with pomp unutterable, and pageant brighter than the light, by the prostrate hierarchies of universal heaven. The whole kingdom of glory streams forth like a substantial effulgence from Jesus Himself. Its existence was implied in His predestination, and His predestination in due season effected and accomplished it. As the court exists for the king, so heaven exists for Jesus. It is eminently a kingdom of light; and we are told that it needs neither sun nor moon to illuminate it, because the Lamb Himself is the light thereof. In all the varied magnificence of its unrevealed and indescribable beauty, there is nothing which is not for Him, nothing whose nature does not refer it to Him, which is not marked with the seal of the Lamb, and has not a peculiar conformity to His Human Headship, and does not borrow all its splendour from His original brightness. The immensity of its glad multitudes, crowding round Him in their abundant and exulting choirs, is for His glory. Their very number is His delight, and His insatiable love feeds upon the countlessness of their ranks and the innumerable variety of their degrees of beatific joy, as on the cherished, hard-earned fruit of His dear, life-giving Passion.

It was when the angels had adored the decrees of Divine Compassion, and had bowed before the inferior Nature which the Person of the Word had vouchsafed to assume and exalt, and had done homage in spirit to the mortal Mother of the Incarnate God, that heaven, with its

Vision of the Most Holy Trinity, was thrown open to the angelic ranks. It was when the Soul of Jesus sank through the ground at the foot of the Cross on Calvary, that It took with It that Beatific Vision to Adam and Eve, to Abraham and David, to Moses and Isaias, to Joachim and Anne, to Joseph and the Holy Innocents, and to all the saints of the old covenant detained in the Limbus of the Fathers; and when He ascended from Olivet He bore them with Him to the glory and the grandeur of the local heaven. For no child of man had entered there, until He first, His sacrifice accomplished, with His glorified Body and Soul opened the way. He conquered the kingdom of nature with the forces of the kingdom of grace; but the kingdom of glory was His regal sanctuary where He reigned undisturbed, the eternal Prince of Peace. He had no need to conquer what had never been invaded. At this hour there is no road to heaven but through the portals of His judicial power, which He exercises not as God but as Man. When our happy souls enter there, leaving their bodies, the faithful companions of their pilgrimage, to return to dust, it is only through an operation of His grace, which shall conform those bodies to the likeness and fashion of His glorious Body, that we shall one day be reunited to them, and enter into the plenitude of our everlasting bliss. Thus all is of Him, and by Him, and in Him. He created the kingdom of glory, and for His Human Nature was it created. The angels entered it through the acknowledgment of the mystery of His Incarnation. No son of man entered it, till He had first purchased the right of his admission by His Precious Blood. Souls, O happy they, the emancipated of every hour! only enter there through the verdict of

His judicial love. They that die, almost in sin, but catch the Cross as they are falling into the abyss, enter there through a way of cleansing fires which are the fires of His dear love, cheating hell, and multiplying the numbers of the redeemed by this last artifice of ineffable compassion and royal munificence of pardon. The bodies that are already there, have ascended or been assumed because of His; and there is not a body will enter there on the wonderful morning of the general resurrection except by the imprint of the Body of Jesus upon it. And when all are there, spirits of angels, bodies and souls of men, and, if so be, the children of other natures and of future creations, the Lamb in His Human Nature will be the bright, sufficient, beatifying light of all. Surely then all is His and all from Him. Never was kingdom held by king with titles half so many or so rightful as those whereby Jesus holds and rules and multiplies and gladdens His favourite realm of glory. O that the hour were come when we shall be admitted to kiss hands and do homage for that fief of glory, of measure and of beauty known already to Himself, which he shall confer on our unworthiness as the crown of His own everlasting love of our foreseen elected souls!

But the kingdom of glory has its hierarchies, precedencies, ceremonies, and rubrics, as well as the kingdom of grace upon earth. The highest ceremonial of the Church on earth, the very crown of all her ritual and worship, is the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. So is it with the kingdom of glory. The adoration of the Immaculate Lamb is the occupation of heaven; for they that are contemplating the Vision of the Most Holy are also worshipping the Lamb. Now, then, while at this hour our sanctuary is unnaturally still around the throne

of the Sacramental Lamb, let us think of the local heaven, and the worship of His Human Nature there, in its union with the Person of the Word. What bright and beautiful multitude of glorious souls is this which forms the outer ring of the stupendous court? It is that portion of the kingdom of grace which the waters of baptism alone have flooded. The little ones have become as it were men of thirty-three, like Jesus Himself, and their untried, untempted nature has been washed white as snow in His redeeming Blood. The mightiest scholars upon earth know not so much as they, though the hearts of saints on earth have sometimes loved with a love intense as theirs, and perhaps more intense. Earth's highest joys are not so much as a shadow to the Beatific Rapture which possesses their spirits with its pulses of thrilling life. As is the pearly whiteness of the dawn of day, so is their light in the splendour of that kingdom; because their Brother wrought a miracle for them, and turned His blood into water, and washed them clean, and the very Name of the Vision they are gazing on filled them with the grace of adoption, and gave them an eternal inheritance that fadeth not away. Is there a lot on earth round which the sunshine of prosperity and joy is shining brightest, which is not purely miserable and undesirable compared with the present glory of the infant members of Jesus whom baptism has saved for ever? I do not know but that a holy heart on earth fire-tried and cross-laden, whom love is martyring, while his inner soul is seamed with the stigmata of the blessed Passion,—I know not if such a lot, as well for its present Christ-like suffering as for its future crown, be not preferable to the glory of the baptized children: but sure I

am that there is no other lot on earth which is, beside that single one of saintly suffering.

But let us pass beyond the abounding joy of this outer ring. What other multitude is this, a multitude that no man can number? Who would have believed that so many souls of men had ever been created? O prolific Blood of Jesus? O joy of the mighty multitude, that it is so incalculably multitudinous! Here are all nations and tribes and tongues, all sexes, ages, ranks, occupations, and times of the world's history. How beautiful they are! how various their sanctity! how orderly their classes and degrees! See how the sacramental characters shine upon their souls, the diamond of baptism the ruby of confirmation, the emerald of order with its sevenfold depths of clear green light; and each gem pouring forth a more abundant and bewitching splendour than the great solar body that lights and fertilizes the kingdom of nature here. There are pontiffs and doctors, martyrs, confessors, and virgins, novices and lay brothers, religious and seculars, all bathed in the sunlight of the Lamb. These are the saints who have not attained to the vacant thrones in the angelic choirs, the unplaced saints, as they may be called; and each soul among them is in itself a world of sweet worship to the Lamb. And see how each hour there are fresh arrivals at the gates of heaven, and the angels lead the new comers to Peter, and Peter to Mary, and Peter and Mary to Jesus, and Jesus to His Father; and each new soul gives force to the mighty undulations of excessive joy through all the rings of heaven, and these hourly festivals of charity beat like fresh pulses, discernible even in the extatic rapture of the Perpetual Unchanging Vision. O how dull earth grows as we think

and speak of things like these! Blessed Sacrament! what should we do if we had not Thee?

But we must onward still into the thick of heaven. We come now to the nine concentric rings of the holy angelic kingdom, among whose thrones, human but with angelic seeming, are placed those of earth's mightiest saints, elected to fill the seats of the one-third of that bright host, whom Lucifer drew down with him in his fall. There are three gorgeous hierarchies, subordinate the lower to the higher, the lower illuminated by the higher, and the highest by God Himself. In each hierarchy are three congenial choirs, of various gifts and holiness and power, whose names the apostles have recorded for us, and of whose diversified functions and loveliness the traditions of theology have much to tell. Each angel, say some theologians, is a species by himself. But in some respects there is an unkindliness about this view; for then many million species of God's reasonable creatures were extinguished with Lucifer, so far as their means of worshipping their good Creator are concerned. Others say that in each choir there are three species, differing from each other in ways of which it is not easy for us to form a conception; while the grace of each angel is distinct and singular. Thus, as it were by twenty-seven steps, through thrice nine rings, adumbrating the Most Holy Trinity, we mount upwards through the angelic kingdom, mingled with the elect sanctity of earth, until we reach the royal throne of the angelical vicegerent, which Lucifer forfeited by his fall; and which is now occupied, some conjecture by St. Michael, some by St. Joseph in reward for his office of foster-father to the Incarnate Word. See to what a height we have mounted! And if we turn to look back on the magnificence we have

traversed, specially those nine oceans of living intellectual light and angelic holiness, how bewildering is the prospect, how entrancing one while the music, one while the glad silence that reigns all round. How near is the Blessed Sacrament to us on earth, how far it is to reach that Human Nature in the throng of heaven!

Higher still. Beyond the vicegerent's throne come the seven mighty chosen angels that stand ever before the throne of God, Michael the guardian angel of the Church, perhaps also of the Sacred Humanity when on earth, and of the reigning Sovereign Pontiffs, the destroyer and conqueror of the rebel angels: Gabriel, the angel of the Incarnation, the guardian of Mary, the inspirer of Daniel, the lover of sacrifice and prayer, and the bearer of God's sweet messages; Raphael, the most human-like of all the angels, compassionately interesting himself in our mortal vicissitudes, as though he had a heart of flesh, and taking to the pathos and romance of human life as if it were his own, the guide of the wandering, the light of the blind, the medicine of the sick, representing in himself the triple mercies of the Three Divine Persons, and with such an abundant source of joy to shed and pour over all his clients, that if Michael is the shadow of the Father and Gabriel of the Son, St. Raphael may well be named the angel of the Holy Ghost. There also are those other four, whose names, as St. Boniface said in the counsel held at Rome under Pope Zacharias, were not publicly acknowledged by the Church, but who are called, according to certain traditions and private revelations, Uriel, the Strong Companion, mentioned in the third and fourth books of Esdras, and who is represented in Christian art as holding in his right hand a drawn sword across his breast, with flames on his left; Sealtiel, the

Praying Spirit, said to be the angel who appeared to Agar in the wilderness, whom art depicts with face and eyes cast down, and his hands clasped upon his breast, as if he were a penitent; Jehudiel, the Remunerator, supposed to be the angel whom God said that He sent before the children of Israel, and who in pictures holds a golden crown in his right hand, and a scourge of three black cords in his left; and Barachiel, the Helper, said to be the angel who spoke to Abraham and rebuked Sara when she laughed, and who is painted with the lap of his cloak filled with white roses.* Oh what delights does not the Incarnate Word find in the mighty beings and deep spirits and magnificent worship of these glorious creatures! If science could walk the coral depths and explore the sunless caverns of the whole Atlantic and Pacific, the Arctic and Antarctic oceans, if it could note and class and learn the genera and the species of shells and weeds and living things innumerable, a more various, fertile world would not be opened to the discoverer, than the almost inexhaustibly rich natures and stupendous graces and amazing glories of these seven spirits, who are the chosen neighbours of the throne of God. The Soul of the Incarnate Word explores them with consummate complacency, crowns their worship by His blissful acceptation, and vouchsafes to receive from their clean thuribles the earthly smelling incense of our human prayers: and

* For an interesting account of the rise and progress of the cultus of the Seven Angels, the vision of Antonio Duca, and the revelations of the Blessed Amadeus, see Cornelius à Lapide in his Commentary on the Apocalypse. There is however a controversial Scotism about the revelations of the Blessed Amadeus, which is very suspicious. There is also a great deal of curious information respecting the seven angels in Sarconio. Ritratto di S. Rafaele. Naples, 1738, p. 32 to p. 78.

He is doing all this even now, He who is in yonder Blessed Sacrament.

Higher still. We now approach the far-famed hierarchy of the Incarnation, wrapt in a glory of its own, suffused with especial splendours from its vicinity to the Sacred Humanity of the Word. There are the eleven Apostles whom Jesus reassembled after His Resurrection, and Matthias whom the Holy Ghost elected into the bishopric of Judas, and Paul on his thirteenth throne, and Barnabas who filled up the apostolic college. There are the unapostolic evangelists Mark and Luke, with Simeon and Anna, Elizabeth and Zacharias, Joachim and Anne, Magdalen, Martha, and Lazarus, Simon the Cyrenian, and Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus and Stephen, Malchus and Veronica, Longinus and Dimas, with the seventy disciples, and others, Gospel saints. There are the Holy Innocents, whose blood was the first shed for Jesus when He had first shed His for them in the Circumcision: and to whom, as some revelations to the saints disclose to us, the full use of reason, with immense capabilities of meriting, was given in the moment of their massacre, and who now enjoy singular power in heaven as the patrons of the dying, and with the double invocation of whose sweet names St. Francis of Sales fortified himself to die. There also, in unexampled height and bliss, are the two assessors of Mary's throne, the Baptist, whose life was one long unearthly miracle, and St. Joseph; who, tested and tried as the sport of God's most mysterious ways, deserved to represent the Eternal Father on earth, and lived a life as quiet as the noiseless course of Providence, and as modest and commonplace as the three-and-thirty years of the Incarnate Word. This is the hierarchy of the Incarnation.

As the clouds nighest to the sunset are shot with many-coloured gold, ever changing, ever new, glowing like celestial furnaces of beauty, at all moments wonderful and glorious, yet ere we name shape or hue, they are other, yet still the same, alive with light, and as it seems, dilating now and now contracting with pulses of ardent fire, like hearts that beat quick with excess of joy, — so are these saints of the hierarchy of the Incarnation, that are grouped close in, amid the coruscations of the Lamb.

Higher still. Within reach of the Sacred Heart of Jesus rises the mediatorial throne of Mary. There is hardly a date in the past of heaven more notable than the day of her Coronation. She is the Woman, clothed with the Sun, with the moon beneath her feet, and a crown of twelve apostles like stars around her head. Wonderful, amazing, is her glory. It is too bright to see, save darkly and in enigma. Ocean opens out after ocean. Can we measure the munificence of God, the liberality of the Word, the extent of what is communicable by the Most Holy Trinity? Then, and not before, we may measure Mary's glory, and survey it, and note it down by acre, pole, and perch. She is the first fruit of the predestination of Jesus, nay, an integral part of it. She shares subordinately with Him in the glory of being the final cause, the model, and exemplar of all creation. From each of His three royalties of nature, grace, and glory there devolves on her a separate queendom, which is a participation of His regal jurisdiction. She is so like Him, that when we describe her, it sounds as if we were describing Him. Bossuet called her "Christ begun;" and as He began by her, so did He please to

consummate the long series of His gracious mysteries in the ceremonial of her heavenly Coronation. The justice of God is withheld from her, that she may be the exclusive spirit of the compassionate Incarnation. For in truth she is filled full to overflowing with the divine mercy, till her being seems nothing but mercy, and her name is no longer Mother of God only, but Mother of mercy also; and all this that she may shine to our eyes with a more palpable created and human loveliness. Every kind of grace in the Soul of Jesus claims the right to crown Mary on its own account, and endow her with some peculiar prerogative. The grace of union crowns her as the Deipara, the Mother of God. His habitual grace crowns her with a sanctity to which all the united holiness of angels and saints are but as glow-worms to the noonday sun. The grace of union and habitual grace combine to rest upon her brows the tiara of an Immaculate Conception, Perpetual Virginity, and the glory of her Assumption. His actual graces rain gems and jewels all over her royal robes. His gifts crown their own likeness in her spotless soul; and her miraculous powers would seem to rival His, if hers were not but the reflection of His, and that she had from Him what He held only from Himself. His grace of Headship crowns her queen of heaven, empress of the angels, mistress of the saints, lady of purgatory, and ruler of the earth; and what He may give her to hold in her own right beside, who can tell? For there are rights to those in Him, which are not the less rights because apart from Him they would not be. All I have said is as nothing. So it must be. Love can divine, but scholarship cannot tell, the glory of the

Mother of Him who is yonder in the Blessed Sacrament.

Higher still: near, indeed, as we may count things in heaven, but higher than an eagle's flight, if our measure be human thought! There, in the very heart of the Great Mystery, as if It were the breast-plate of the Most Holy Trinity, is the Sacred Humanity of Jesus, glowing with the fire of the Divinity, with its created grace and gifts and form, all unconsumed in that light and beauty unapproachable. Shall we accumulate great great words to describe Its glory? Shall we borrow the imagery of Ezekiel and the Apocalypse to make a picture to ourselves of that enthroned, exalted Son of Man? Shall we tell how on His garment and on His thigh His Name is written, King of kings, and Lord of lords? What need is there for that? Better make haste, from amid the fires of that Vision, to claim Him for our own. Himself is more to us than His glory; and we tremble to lose Him when we see Him where He is. Yes! it is Himself. See the features, without doubt the features of a man, and like to those we saw when we timidly looked up into the face of our Mother and our Queen. There is the hair; it is human; the fire has not touched it. There is the face that was once so well known to the fishermen of Gennesareth, and was once so piteous in the streets of the cruel Jerusalem. There is the very look of reverential fear, which was so beautiful when H prayed in the glens of mountainous Judea. There is the voice of Him who preached and told the parables, cast out devils and gave absolution, spoke seven times words of love from the harsh throne we gave Him on the Cross, and who is saying now many times an hour, Come, blessed soul! enter the kingdom prepared for you before the

foundation of the world. It is Himself. If we saw Him eat fish and honeycomb by the lake, we could not be more sure. O how He is drawing our soul to Him! Sweet compulsion, which makes the will more free than ever! beautiful constraint, that emancipates by its captivity! whence come these attractions that are now drawing us to themselves? They come from the altar-throne, and from the Human Soul and Body that are there. I will draw them, says He in the monstrance, with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love.* Ah Lord Jesus! we spoke of Thee as in heaven, and lo! Thou art here, and all heaven is with Thee here. O Blessed Sacrament! Thou makest all life now like one continued walk to Emmaus. Our hearts burn, and it is not that we know not why, but that we will not remember why. "I was like a foster-father to Ephraim: I carried them in my arms; and they knew not that I healed them." But how long shall these things be. O that our hearts were modelled upon Thee as creation was, and crowned by Thee as creation is, and that since thou hast our nature, we might participate more abundantly in Thy grace, and that as Thou wilt lead us to glory hereafter, so now Thy hidden Sacramental presence might already be our glory here!

I can dream of no perfection like to what I find at every turn in this most Blessed Sacrament. The tapers have a little wasted, and the flowers have a little languished; and amid the silent throng of worshippers He has heard many a secret of the heart, healed many a wound, answered many a petition, and accorded many a benediction. O look upon Him! Girt with the rings of His triple kingdom of nature, grace, and glory, how beautiful He is! And what is more than beautiful, how good!

* Hosea, xi. 4.

"Why callest thou me good? There is none good but One, and that is God." Even so, Lord! and therefore it is that Thou art good: because Thou art God. He is here, down on his own earth: nature is all around Him. Grace is darting from Him, like invisible sunbeams, from off His little temporary throne and from out His poor crystal prison-palace. Glory is round Him also. He has brought His own with Him. But that is not all. Wreaths of glorious angels are round His Sacramental Presence, adoring with wonder ever new the depths of this infinite compassion. To their vast intelligence the mystery of the Mass and of the Blessed Sacrament is never familiar. Not one of its least abysses could they thoroughly explore in a million of the giant years of the solar system. It is we only to whose cold love it is familiar, and to whose weak faith it is so little interesting. And with the angels, too, as revelations say, are the beatified souls of such saints as in their lifetime haunted the tabernacles for special love of this divinest mystery. Why hast Thou surrounded Thyself thus with Thy three kingdoms? Is it as a triple rampart against the coldness of my heart, and the irreverence of my scanty adoration? When I look upon Him, He reproaches me with my want of love. I could almost think those white robes stirred, and that He was going to speak, and then I should die. O that I might bargain with him! He wants nothing of me but my love; and I want nothing of Him but more love to love Him with. Why can we not agree? He is always lovely, but never so lovely as in the Blessed Sacrament. But now that I have adored His Human Nature with all its ineffable sanctity, empires of Nature, seas of grace, realms of glory, and

manifold prerogatives, I feel so unspeakably to love that peculiar presence of It, which He vouchsafes in the Blessed Sacrament, that Mary and the angels and the saints all seem too little to praise, to love, to magnify, His Sacred Humanity as it deserves; and my love is only satisfied, my joy alone complete, to think that that glorious Body and that blessed Soul are assumed by the Person of the Eternal Word, and are so His, so belong to Him, that no union is like to that but the unity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. All blessing be to Thee, most Holy Sacrament! for that Thou art God, and for that Thou art Man, and for that in love of us Thou art so lovingly and humbly veiled, and yet withal so indubitably distinct and clear!

SECTION III.

THE INCARNATION A WORLD OF ITS OWN.

If the assumption of it by the Person of the Eternal Word has conferred upon the Sacred Humanity such wonderful exaltation, we cannot be surprised to find that the Incarnation is a kind of world of itself, and thoroughly furnished with all that a world requires. The world of nature is intermingled with a supernatural world, and to such an extent and in such a variety of ways, that it is not easy to see how even the natural world would go on naturally, if it were not for the supernatural; and this is continually bringing home to us the fact that neither angels nor men were first created in a state of nature, but of grace. Now as the Incarnation was the cause of that primeval boon, so also is it the cause of all that is supernatural in the world. From it come revelations, prophecies, miracles, and all sanctity. From it

angelic ministries, the operations of grace, the efficacy of sacraments, and the phenomena of the Catholic Church. From it, with whatever corruptions falsified, come the laws, literatures, politics, philosophies, and civilizations, which are actually uppermost in the world. From it everything which softens life, consoles sorrow, soothes poverty, and makes the world endurable. All time belongs to it. For all grace and all glory that were in ages gone, antediluvian, patriarchal, gentile, jew, or Christian, were from it; all are from it now; and all will be altogether from it till time shall be no more. Nay more; for as the predestination of Jesus adorned the eternity that was before the foundation of the world, so will His kingdom and glory be henceforth itself eternal.

The Church is in fact the world of the Incarnation, the elect world, uniting heaven and earth, in which all living souls are mercifully called to work out their salvation. The world is a revelation of God. It displays His character, and unfolds the excellence of His various attributes; and through the many-coloured veil of things we may discern Him who is invisible. This is the great end of the world, to reveal God. But the Incarnation is a much greater and more intimate revelation of God to us than the world. It illuminates many more of His attributes, and with a light far more distinct and beautiful. It tells us mysteries, of the very existence of which nature could tell us nothing, much less give us the key to unlock their consoling secrets. It explains to us all we know of creation. It discloses to us the Most Holy Trinity. It unveils to us the counsels of God in the kingdom of the angels, in the fall of man, in the permission of evil, in the scheme of redemption, and in the nature and method of divine grace. We can map out

the world to come with almost as much accuracy as if it were but a distant land on our own globe. We can trace the operation of the communion of saints in heaven, in purgatory, and on earth, with almost unfailing exactness. In a word there is hardly anything we know of God, creation, grace, or eternal things, which we do not know through the revealing of the Incarnation; and what little we might have known, if the Incarnation had not been revealed to us, we know through it so much more clearly and connectedly and abundantly, that it may almost be called a new knowledge. Yet we must not forget, while we speak of the knowledge which the Incarnation has given us of creation, grace, and glory, that their very existence, as well as our knowledge of them, are due to that mystery, in the same way as an effect is referable to its cause.

Moreover the Incarnation has an empire of its own. It has, so to speak, a nationality which is above all the little nationalities of geography, government, or blood. It has thrown down the partition walls of tribes, kindreds, and nations, and made Jew and Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, into one heavenly nation, one complete family, in Jesus Christ the Head. As an empire, it has a government of its own, earthly and visible, yet like nothing else on earth besides. Its Sovereign Pontiff is its heaven-anointed king, the Vicar and delegate of the Incarnate Word Himself, and the actual successor of His apostle. No potentate in the world has such a plenitude of uncircumscribed power as he, who is almost without a single source of worldly power himself. Mountains and seas are no limits to his kingdom. No form of temporal government exists, but can fall in harmoniously with his. No jurisdiction is so instantaneously

and delightedly acknowledged by its subjects as his; and no liberty is so complete as that which his children enjoy. This empire of the Incarnation has also its own laws. It has a system of legislation peculiarly its own, and which has grown with the growth of the empire from its first beginning; and men name it Canon Law. It embraces more of the secrets of government and more legislative wisdom than any other jurisprudence in the world; and it is so peculiar, and essentially so unnational, that it could not be applied to any other government than that of the Church.

It has also institutions of its own, and of a character as peculiar as its government and legislation. A general council is like no other parliament; for its decisions on points of doctrine become infallible, when approved by the Sovereign Pontiff. Yet the gift is in him, not in the Council; nor is a council needed to its use. The judgment is in him alone, irreformable, irrefragable, indivisible. Baptism, and indeed all the Sacraments, are institutions to which the world has no parallel; and the same may be said of the religious orders. It has also a literature of its own, which is not only occupied with its own immediate concerns, but which treats of the affairs of the world in an entirely new and peculiar manner, because of the point of view from which it regards them. It has a poetry of its own, and arts of its own, and a diplomacy of its own, and a philosophy of its own; and theology is its own science, and one which has told more strikingly on the minds of men and their intellectual progress than any other. Nay, it has even formed modern languages upon itself, and extended their range in order that they may meet its requirements, as St. Augustine observed long ago of Latin itself. For the Incarnation

has brought a new set of ideas into the world, and those ideas must find adequate expression. To pass over the scientific terminology which the accurate handling of grace, the mystery of the Incarnation itself, the Sacraments, and the Most Holy Trinity, require, the Incarnation has introduced a whole circle of moral notions quite peculiar to itself; the strength of weakness, the triumph of defeat, the blessing of sorrow, the might of pain, the power of concealment, the glory of submission, all these, and a host of cognate ideas, rise out of our Blessed Saviour's Passion alone. Finally, this world of the Incarnation has a history of its own. The facts of this history are unlike other facts. They are supernatural always, and often miraculous. Its judgments are given after different standards and measures, and through the application of different tests, than secular history. It breathes a different air, and has another sort of brightness to light it up. Moreover it is true of all other histories, sciences, philosophies, literatures, and civilizations, that the theological view of them is not only the widest and the grandest, but it is the only important or true view of them. To all this we must add furthermore that the world of the Incarnation has a peculiar spirit of its own, and gives out a very special and discernible genius, which the spirit of the unregenerate world instantly recognizes as not only uncongenial with itself, but even incompatible with its existence, and breaks out forthwith into loud cries, and throws itself into demoniacal convulsions, just as those possessed with devils did at the approach of Jesus.

There has never been in the world a power like to this power of the Incarnation. None which has wrought such changes, or brought about such tremendous revo-

lutions. None which has gathered to itself such enthusiastic loyalty, or for which men have been so eager to lay down their lives and to shed their blood. None which has allured such a vast amount of holiness to adorn it, or of consummate intelligence to propagate and defend it. At the same time there is none which has provoked so much opposition, has so stung wickedness to the quick, or has been visited with such intense and withering and preternatural hatred. Now, what is the secret of all this power, this undying energy, which crosses over ages of time and continents of earth, and waxes no weaker, nay, rather quickens itself by distance and duration? Is it to be found merely in its success? Success is certainly prone to attract to itself love, admiration, and submission on the one hand, while on the other it awakens jealousy and hatred. But mere success can furnish no adequate solution to the problem; and in truth it has not by any means been uniformly what on worldly principles would be regarded as successful. Neither is the intrinsic attractiveness, great as it is, of the mystery itself, the questions it answers, and the interests it undertakes to promote, a sufficient account of the supernatural power of the idea and empire of the Incarnation.

It must be looked for in that perpetual presence with His Church which our Lord promised in the Gospel. In other words, it must be sought in the Blessed Sacrament itself. The great Emperor is secretly present in this His mystical empire, not in one point only, to which worshippers must come in arduous pilgrimage; but He has diffused the real presence of His Sacred Humanity all over the Church. He does not take on Himself the exterior government of the Church; but leaving that to His Vicar, He hides Himself everywhere as the fountain

of light and grace and power, in every realm beneath the sun, and upon countless altars. Nothing will explain the phenomena of the Church, except the Blessed Sacrament. Nothing else will interpret its history, or account for its miraculous propagation and preservation. The Incarnation is not simply a past fact; it is the living life of the Incarnate God. It is not merely a glory of the theological schools; it is the Sacrifice of the daily altar. On earth as well as in heaven, Jesus Himself is the present centre round which all the elements of the world of the Incarnation are perpetually revolving. This is why no extern can ever understand the Church, but must, as by a fatal necessity, blunder when he speaks of her, no matter whether it is to praise or blame. He cannot realize what it is to have the Blessed Sacrament, or what the minds and hearts of those must be like who live upon the doctrine, the devotion, and the thought.

Let us look at the wonderful mystery of our Lord's own Communion. Nothing can illustrate in a more touching way how completely the Blessed Sacrament is everything to us in the Church, than that He should have vouchsafed to have received it Himself. Long before the hour came, He had looked forward to that scene in the supper-room. Having loved His own, He loved them to the end, and reserved the chief invention of His love until He had come to the very threshold of His Passion, and they were about to be parted. He who had so wonderfully possessed His Soul in patience, and seemed as if nothing could stir Him but His Father's glory, could say with a most unwonted energy of expression, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you. And how? The Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world was slain also on the Thursday

night, and that by Himself and by Divine Love, before the sins of men slew Him the next day on Calvary.

The awful words have been spoken. This is My Body. It is the first time earth has heard them. If it were not inanimate, it would have rocked to its very foundations, even as the gates of hell are vehemently shaken by the Sacrifice of the Mass. Our Lord stands, cognizable as Mary's Son and in the dimensions of mature mortal age. On His Face is a light of love, more bright than a saint's extasy. He stands there, Body, Soul and Divinity, holding in His Hand with unutterable thrills of joy, His own very Body, with the Soul and the Divinity. He holds it forth for a moment for the adoration of His apostles; and then enters Himself into the richest inheritance which He has left to His Church, by communicating Himself with Himself. By virtue of the Incarnation the Incarnate Lord received Himself Incarnate, was held in His own Hands, lay upon His own Tongue, descended into His own Heart, by the most real reality on earth, His own real presence in the Blessed Eucharist. How needful then, in a far other sense of the word, must the Blessed Sacrament be to us, if He even vouchsafed to need It Himself! And how could the mystery of the Incarnation more utterly embrace us all within its charmed circle, and as it were return into itself, than by this other mystery of our Lord's Communion?

It could not increase the grace of His Soul, as it increases grace in ours; for from the first moment of His Conception the plenitude of His grace was not capable of augmentation. But, as St. Thomas teaches us, It filled Him with unutterable sweetness. Every wonderful faculty of His Blessed Soul was as it were inundated

with a sweetness which nothing on earth could give. The darkness of the Passion was beginning to gather round Him. All the deep places of iniquity, whether in hell or on earth, were about to give up their gloomy waters to drown His Soul in a very deluge of unparalleled suffering. The flood was rising, and the waters were to come in, even into His Soul; and He vouchsafed as it were, to fortify Himself with His own Viaticum. There was no source of power, light, or sweetness equal to that. It was far more than the ten legions of angels that were impatiently waiting His call, and longing to break in upon that drama of human wickedness with the same gleamy swords which had driven the rebel angels over the battlements of heaven. He let His single angel come to soothe Him in Gethsemane, to teach us that even in the grandeur of this Blessed Sacrament we must not despise or neglect other and lesser means of grace. Nay, while the thrills of Its ineffable sweetness were still vibrating in His Sacred Heart and quickening the pulses of His Precious Blood, He took the same Blessed Sacrament and communicated Judas, stooping to go down into that foul and accursed heart, that we might learn not to exclude secret sinners from that marvellous gift, nor put limits to His prodigal liberality in the giving of it.

And how this wonderful Communion of Himself brings before us the whole doctrine of the mystery! What He held in His Hand was the same Blessed Sacrament which His priests hold in their hands now. Yet with differences which only serve the more entirely to prove it the same The Blessed Sacrament is Jesus as He is, only without dimensions, and beneath the sacramental veils. This is its very truth and grandeur and surpassing reality. So as Jesus is now in heaven with

His glorified Body in impassible Flesh, in like manner He is in the Blessed Sacrament in impassible Flesh. But that Thursday night His Flesh was passible and His Body not yet glorified; and thus in the Blessed Sacrament which He held in His Hand, He was in passible Flesh. So that had the Blessed Sacrament been reserved during Good Friday He would have died in the Blessed Sacrament as well as upon the Cross. His Blood which is in the Host by concomitance would have left it, the Body and the Divinity alone remaining; for the Human Soul would have left it also, when it was separated from the Body on the Cross and descended into Limbus. In like manner throughout His Passion His interior pains would have been represented in His Sacred Heart in the Blessed Sacrament; but not His exterior sufferings. For though He would have been in the Host in passible Flesh, it would have been in an impassible way, according to the manner of His sacramental presence now. He could not have been spit upon, or buffeted, or His hair torn, or His limbs wounded. Just as sacrilege now can only reach His honour, and cannot penetrate into the sacramental sanctuary, and outrage His Blessed Self. So that the Passion would as it were have been divided into two. It is true that Hugh of St. Victor says that our Lord at different times before His Passion assumed the four qualities of a glorified body; subtlety, when He was born of a Virgin Mother; agility, when He walked upon the surface of the waters; brightness at the Transfiguration; and impassibility when He communicated Himself and His disciples. But this, as St. Thomas shows, is contrary to the truth of the Blessed Sacrament. Think also of the parallel wonders of the chalice; and the whole of the Catholic doctrine of the

mystery will be brought before you with amazing clearness. The Body and the Soul would have retired from the Precious Blood, which would have existed in the chalice, as well as on the olive-roots of Gethsemane, the pavement of Jerusalem, the wood of the Cross, and the veil of Mary, only in an impassible state. Is there anything in theology more interesting, or which fills us more full of silent reverence and breathless love than the articles of St. Thomas, in which that angelic mind occupies itself with the question of our Lord's Communion?

But there is another wonder in it which must not be forgotten. In the first book we learned that no eye could see our Lord in His mystical state beneath the sacramental veils. But when He held the Blessed Sacrament in His own Hand, and was communicating Himself and the apostles, He clearly beheld Himself and the miraculous method of His existence in the Sacrament, a privilege which even His Immaculate Mother has not shared, and of which, either as regards the joy that vision gave Him, or the nature of the vision itself, we can form no adequate conception.

I should not have put these facts together, if they were to be regarded simply as scholastic subtleties. It is impossible for a pious, believing reader to look at them in such a light. They illuminate the whole doctrine of the Incarnation, and give us fresh reasons for loving and adoring the Blessed Sacrament, while they enable us somewhat the more clearly to understand it. Especially they bring home to us the truth of the Blessed Sacrament, in a manner which is awful even to our faith from its intense reality. And they alone who have fixed their wondering gaze on our Lord communicating Himself before His Passion that Thursday night,

can realize how completely the Incarnation is the life of the Church, the greatest of all created powers, the crown of the creation of God, and the unspeakable joy of the Eternal Word Himself. I have said nothing of our Lord's Communion, but what St. Thomas has already said; yet it is fearful, and perforce inclines the heart to prayer. All the mysteries of Jesus are incomprehensible condescensions. Can anything go deeper than the condescension of His communicating Judas? If we weigh well the significance of doctrine, we shall have to admit that His own Communion was a deeper condescension still.

SECTION IV.

THE THIRTY-THREE YEARS.

In order to have a true devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to the different mysteries of Jesus, it is necessary to have a devotion first of all to the mystery of the Incarnation itself. Very wonderful, and fraught with intense love, are the truths which theology teaches us of the union of the Divine and Human Natures in the Person of the Eternal Word. But these fountains of knowledge are not open to all, nor suited to the capacities of all. For the great majority of persons such a devotion to the Incarnation in itself may be obtained by a special devotion to the mystery and feast of the Annunciation, or to the communion of Jesus, a mystery full of unction and sweetness. Such a devotion to the Incarnation is also a frequent grace accorded to pilgrimages to Loreto. But however it is to be gained, gained it must be, if we are to excel in devotion to the Blessed

Sacrament, or to any of the particular mysteries of Jesus; for in both these cases the continual remembrance of the Incarnation of the Word is as it were the foundation of our devotion. It is on this account that in the three last sections I have spoken of the Blessed Sacrament in connexion with the Incarnation in general, prior to speaking of its relation to the various mysteries of our Lord's life, which is now to occupy our attention.

If we look at the Thirty-Three years, we shall see that during that time our Blessed Lord lived various lives, vouchsafed to perform divers mysteries, to exhibit certain characteristics, to do peculiar works, and to effect a certain union between Himself and us. Now the propositions before us are these. In the Blessed Sacrament He lives all His lives, fully represents all His mysteries, combines all His characteristics, fulfils His work, and accomplishes His union; and therefore It is in itself a faithful and perfect picture of Jesus.

Our lord may be said to live eight different kinds of lives; each of them so full of gracious mysteries, of divine teaching, and of attractive love, that long years of extatic contemplation would be unable to exhaust any one of them. His Life in Mary has already been considered, and what were its characteristics but helplessness and imprisonment, and yet the helpless Prisoner the while giving grace, and causing exultation in all who came nigh unto Him? And is not this at once the life of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle? His Infant Life formed the subject of the greater part of the second book; so that it is needless to repeat here the many minute similitudes which exist between it and the Blessed Sacrament. His Hidden Life in the holy house of Nazareth seems to our natural views the most wonder-

ful of all. It is so unlike our own impatience. It rebukes all our standards, sets at naught our worldly prudence, and puts aside with lofty disdain all our means of compassing success. It is a very mine of supernatural principles. If He is in the world, and for the world's sake, and if His sojourn is to be for so short a period, why spend so large a portion of that small period, in the inactivity of Nazareth? Yet as the Creator of the world was then, so is He now. What more secret and hidden than the Blessed Sacrament? What less attractive to the world than His present Nazareth? They who live as it were next door to Him know Him not. Strangers do not suspect Him, any more than they did in the narrow streets of the little Nazareth. His own Josephs, His priests, comprehend not all his glory. And if it be true, as some theologians have said, that He instituted the Blessed Sacrament more for the sake of Mary than for all the rest of the world put together, the parallel will be still greater with that life of eighteen years for Mary and three for His ministry and Passion.

How beautiful also is the Blessed Sacrament as a picture of His Life of Ministry! What silent words, what works of mercy, what miracles of grace, are issuing from Him all the day long in the darkness of the tabernacle! And if He does not tell us parables, is it not partly that it is given to us, as to the apostles, to know all things openly and without parable, and partly is not He Himself the while the sweetest and the deepest of all parables? The Blessed Sacrament is avowedly and intentionally a picture of His Suffering Life. It recalls His Passion. It is a state of mystical death. It is being continually visited with outrage, both intellectual and moral; and the sacrifice in which it is both consecrated and consumed, is

a renewal of the very Sacrifice of Calvary itself. As He was adorned in His Risen Life with the gifts of His glorified Body, so is He in the Blessed Sacrament; and as the occupations of His Risen Life were teaching and instructing His apostles in the things pertaining to the Church, so is He in the Blessed Sacrament eminently the fountain of all the ecclesiastical sciences, while the worship of Him in it is the true source of the ecclesiastical spirit,* which is the health and vigour of the Church; and as the lesson on which He dwelt during His risen life as nearest and dearest to His Sacred Heart, was the thrice-repeated commission to Peter by the shore of His favorite inland sea, Feed My sheep, Feed My lambs, so also is this His own very work in the Blessed Sacrament. He is there that He may become our food. It is the stupendous way whereby God made Man renders Himself capable of being eaten by His creatures. Moreover theologians refer to the forty days of His Risen Life, the delivery of the doctrine of the sacraments, ordinances concerning their matter and form, and the method of their administration, and more especially with regard to the Holy Eucharist itself. So that it would seem as if one main cause of that loving delay of His Ascension was to provide for the worship of the Blessed Sacrament in the future ages of the Church.

His Life of Glory is the very life which He is living now. He has ascended. The Holy Ghost has come;

* Thus M. Olier, the great reformer of the Secular Clergy in France, says: J'ai toujours eu ce desir de pouvoir contribuer à faire connaître Notre-Seigneur, surtout au très-saint Sacrement. Ce devait être l'occupation de tous les prêtres; et je dis un jour à M. de Foix, par un esprit particulier: Ne voulez-vous pas m'aider à former des prêtres du très-saint Sacrement, c'est à-dire, qui portent partout la devotion due à cet adorable mystère? *Vie*, i. 140.

and Jesus Himself has returned, according to His promise, that He might not leave us orphans. As He is in heaven at the moment of consecration, so is He in the adorable Host, only veiled, and without dimensions. As He is in the exaltation of His Ascension, so is He in the abasement of the Blessed Sacrament. His Life above is one and the same Life as that which He leads below. The Ascension, as the angelic doctor teaches us, brought no change over Him. It only elevated His Human Nature to a more befitting place. At first this teaching disappoints us, as if we would fain accumulate glory upon glory on our dearest Lord; and we are inclined to catch at certain expressions in other writers which seem to betoken that some change did come over Him, either of external glory or of His interior dispositions.* But after

* I know of no *theologian* who speaks differently from St. Thomas on this matter; but some devotional writers do, and one especially who was said to have an infused science of our Lord's mysteries. But of course such a gift does not cover all opinions or expressions, and infused theology must be subordinate to the theology of the schools. "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." 1. *Cor.* xiv. 32. M. Olier in his Catechism of the Interior Life, (part ii., lesson ii.), speaks of our Lord's interior dispositions having undergone a change since His glorification, and of His having entered more thoroughly into the dispositions of His Father with regard to sinners, so as to find a difficulty in changing His character of judge for that of advocate; and he gives this as a reason for devotion to our Blessed Lady. His words are: Nous sommes très-indignes d'approcher de Jesus, et il a droit de nous rebuter par sa justice; puis qu'etant entré dans tous les sentiments de son Père, depuis sa sainte Resurrection, il se trouve dans les mêmes dispositions que le Père contre les pecheurs pour les rebuter; tellement que la difficulté consiste à lui faire changer sa qualité de juge en celle d'avocat, et de jugeant, à le rendre suppliant; or c'est ce que font les saints et particulièrement la très-sainte Vièrge. M. Olier's devotion to our Lord's glorified life was taken from his master, Father de Condren:

all, the other is not only the truer, but it is the more attractive doctrine; or rather it is more attractive because it is more true. It is rest and joy and love to think that as He left the earth on sunny Olivet that Thursday afternoon, so heaven keeps Him as earth saw Him last, familiar and unchanged; and that when He comes in His glory to judge the world, He shall come as He went, "in like manner," as the angels told the men of Galilee, so that all shall know that it is He, and His elect shall weep for joy.

Thus the Blessed Sacrament represents as in a picture all these seven lives of Jesus, His life in the Womb, His Infant Life, His Hidden Life, His Public Life, His Suffering Life, His Risen Life, and His Ascended Life. Yet it does not represent them as if it were itself but a mere figure. It shows them forth with a reality equal to their own, and unites in itself all their wonderful condescensions, and the peculiarities of all their mysterious variety. But besides this, the Blessed Sacrament has a life of its own, a distinct life of Jesus, which is commonly called His Mystical Life. It is as it were a double life; for it is a true life, yet another life from His life of glory in heaven. It begins daily, and ten thousand times a day, and in ten thousand places; and it comes to an end as often. Yet neither its beginning nor its ending interrupt for one moment the life of visible glory in heaven. It

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but this last is far from attributing to our Risen or Ascended Lord any change of interior dispositions. He only distinguishes between our Lord's "works in the infirmity of His flesh and His works in the virtue of His glory." Vie, lib. ii. chap. xvii. p. 473. Edit. 1657. The sentence M. Olier quotes from St. Ambrose, de Fide Resurrectionis, will not carry the inferences he draws, and when looked at in the context even makes against him. S. Ambros. de Fid. Res n. 91.

is a life of its own, because of its peculiarity. It is there by a method, which the word Transubstantiation is used to designate rather than to explain. Its state is one of mystical death, of separation of flesh and blood, of voluntary renunciation of the use of the senses; and He is there not by virtue of the Soul, which our Lord did not receive from Mary, but by virtue exactly of that, of all that and of no more than that, which He vouchsafed to owe to her, namely, His Flesh and Blood. Moreover the Blessed Sacrament with its peculiar life is itself the very life of the Church; for as De Lugo observes, while the sacraments of the old law are but conditions, and were the works of the Church, the sacraments of the new law are causes, and are the works of Christ Himself, for which He does but borrow the hands and tongues of His ministers; and of no sacrament is this true in so real and transcendental a sense as of the Holy Eucharist. Thus our Lord's life, with its manner, way, circumstances, state, occupation, and mystery in the Blessed Sacrament, is as peculiar, distinct, and worshipful as any one of His other lives, and is unlike them all, while it embraces all.

If we look at the Three-and-Thirty Years, not as divided into lives, but as marked by certain grand prominent mysteries, we shall see that the Blessed Sacrament fully represents them all in their chief excellencies and peculiarities. The Incarnation was not the instantaneous production of the Human Nature united to the Divine, but the instantaneous production of the Human Nature and its coeval assumption by the Word. By it God became Man; and five words from Mary's lips were sufficient for the Divine operation. So the Blessed Sacrament is a continuation of the Incarnation; it is instantaneous;

one moment and Jesus is not there; five words of His own in the mouth of His priest, and He is there. The Nativity was the manifesting of Him to mankind among visible creatures, as the Blessed Sacrament exhibits Him for the adoration of the people. There the Flesh veiled His Godhead; here the accidents veil both the Manhood and the Godhead. Bethlehem was the House of Bread; and here He is the Bread of men. As in the Circumcision, so in the Blessed Sacrament, the Flesh and the Blood are separated, and the accidents of bread and wine are miraculously detached from their substance. As the truth of the Blessed Sacrament is, that it brings us our Lord as He really is at the moment of consecration, passible if passible, glorious if glorious, without soul if without soul, as would have been on Good Friday; so the peculiarity of the mystery of the Transfiguration was that it was our Lord as He really was not at the time. It anticipated the glory which was not yet His normal or abiding state. It was an apparition of Him as He was to be, and was not yet. Thus the Transfiguration illustrates the Blessed Sacrament by its contrast rather than its comparison. We may indeed compare the two; for as our Lord was for the moment in the Transfiguration, He is now abidingly in the Blessed Sacrament. But in the way of contrast, as the Transfiguration was the glorifying of the Hidden, so is the Blessed Sacrament the hiding of the Glorified.

The Passion separated Body and Blood; so does Transubstantiation. If we look at the Eucharist as a Sacrifice it is the real, renewed drama of the Passion; and if we look at it as a Sacrament, its circumstances of humiliation and its treatment at the hands of men have no

parallel but in the awful Passion. As His Resurrection was in impassible flesh, so is His Eucharistic Life. He enters through the closed doors of hearts; the secret is only thoroughly known to the faithful; for the literary belief of a real presence outside the Church is but a suspicion of the living dogma and life-giving worship of the Blessed Sacrament within the pale. Moreover, it is the seed and the cause of our own future happy resurrection. So it is the link between our Lord's Resurrection and our own. It is the efficacious and omnipotent reproduction of His in ours. As in the Ascension the weight of His Body was gone, and He rose upward through the air to His befitting height and glory; so now He is without weight in the hands of His priests, and were it not for the inexpressible burden of deep dread upon their hearts, chilling the blood and piercing the flesh sensibly with darts of acute fear, they could bear Him round the Church in long procession, and feel no weight and no fatigue. Thus it is that the Blessed Sacrament represents the seven chief mysteries of our dearest Lord, the Incarnation, the Nativity, the Circumcision, the Transfiguration, the Passion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension, while it is, moreover, in an especially real sense the descent of the Holy Spirit also, whose marvellous illapse, to use the word of the ancient fathers, overshadows the altar and the sacrifice.

But the Blessed Sacrament does more than live all the lives of Jesus, and represent all His mysteries; it also combines all His characteristics. In the inspired records of the New Testament a distinctly human character is perceptible in our Blessed Lord, which we can compare with other characters, and give it a name, and imitate its

spirit, and of which we can have quite an intelligible and familiar idea. It is an immense condescension on His part, and is not either to be mentioned or contemplated, except with extreme reverence and a continual recollection of His Divinity. It is more the case with Him than with our Blessed Lady. It is difficult to form a conception of her personal character. She is all suffused with His magnificence. She is so clothed with the sun, that much of herself is invisible. She is partially eclipsed by the excess of her own glory. This character is indeed one of the differences between herself and Him, as I have observed elsewhere.

Now let us venture for a while to look at the King of Saints, as if He were a saint Himself. He will indulge us in all liberties which we take in order to love Him more. He had an extraordinary love of silence. His words, as tradition tells us, were few and rare. He was collected in His Blessed Vision of God. He passed amid earthly things, as if He floated over their service rather than mingled in their crowds, or vouchsafed to sympathize with their interests. All detached men are silent men. Thus, we are told that a more than monastic silence reigned in the holy house of Nazareth, with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph; and indeed the contrary supposition would have in it something unworthy and repulsive. Then, again, with this love of silence was the congenial love of hiddenness, which we have already seen to be a mysterious characteristic of God himself. He was hidden everywhere; hidden when He was in secret, and almost more wonderfully hidden when in public, with the gaze and criticism of men full upon Him. But His silence was not taciturnity, nor His hiddenness sullen or unaffec-

tionate. Hence there was about Him a sweetness such as no saint ever had before or since. Nothing tried Him He was never surprised. Rudeness did not unsettle Him. Injustice kindled no human heat in His heart. Importunity never wearied Him. Unseasonableness never provoked Him. In look and word, in gesture, smile, and tear, He was above all the saintly sweetness which our rough natures can conceive. Out of this came His patience, which was absolutely godlike. What is the life of Job to the mysteries of Holy Week? Indeed, patience, whether in the womb, or in the eighteen years, or in the crowded endurance of His last triduo, seems to have been the way by which He accomplished all His great things. His delay of four thousand years before He came was but a type and prophecy of all that was hereafter. But what shall we say of His humility? The Eternal Word was so enamoured of that virtue that it was the lowliness of Mary which merited to hasten the time of the Incarnation and drew Him down from heaven. With what surpassing beauty of humility would He not then adorn His own Sacred Humanity? And as His humility was just the virtue which He would have us to imitate in Him, so was it the virtue which shed over Him His preternatural attractiveness. No matter how austerely pure His doctrine, or how lofty the holiness He required, sinners were attracted to Him in spite of themselves, and the chains of sin and the world fell off from their souls in the light of His sad yet unrebuking eye. Never was attractiveness like His. It was inexplicable, as the charm of beauty is, or the magnetism of personal influence. Perhaps the secret of it was, not only in the mysterious atmosphere of the Hypostatic Union, but in the heroism of His un-

selfishness. The apostle sums up the whole of His life in that one emphatic phrase, He pleased not Himself; just as the whole perhaps of our half century of life would be faithfully abridged in the saying, For all these years we have done our best to please ourselves. Such were the seven elements of our Lord's human character. He might have been gay, cheerful, quick, fluent, active, playful, commanding, and foremost; and have been by His pre-eminent sanctity the King of Saints. But He chose to be silent, hidden, sweet, patient, humble, attractive, and unselfish.

And by what other words can we characterize the sweet life of the Blessed Sacrament? So near us, so always with us, so full of love toward us, so many widowed, orphaned, tempted, tried, weary, sin-worn, and broken hearts pouring their griefs into His ear, and yet He speaks not; though He knows one word would make a heaven in the most aching heart, and be a spell of peace and power such as the world did not give and cannot take away. He is called down from heaven; and He comes when He is called. But He comes in silence, obeys in silence, is broken in silence, remains in silence, and in silence is consumed. Nay, even in miraculous manifestations, He has spoken many times by pictures, images, and crucifixes; but hardly ever, or very rarely, has the voice been heard from the Host, and when it is, it is not His own voice that we hear. So deeply does He love His characteristic silence, that we can think of nothing more silent than the Blessed Sacrament. Neither do we know of anything more hidden. It is the very deepest of His hiding-places. His Divinity was hidden in Judea; His Humanity also is hidden in the tabernacle.

The method of His sacramental life itself is hidden, and the doctrine of it hidden, and even the very truth of it hidden from multitudes of men, He was not so hidden at Nazareth, as He is in this secrecy of His predilection. In the days of His Three-and-Thirty years He was sweetness itself to all who came near Him. The darker were the poor penitent's sins, the more sweet was the welcome and the mercy of his Redeemer. Yet, where or when was He so sweet as He is now in His Sacrament of love? Sweetness is the very word which theology sets apart to express the effect of that mystery on the soul; and we look for it so naturally in communion that we are disappointed when our own unworthiness has hindered its delightful plenitude. If we picture to ourselves our Lord abiding week after week in the dishonourable tabernacle of some lonely unfrequented Church, or in the rude hands of an insolent heretical multitude, we shall see that the patience of the garden, the prætorium, and the way of the Cross, has so charmed the Heart of Jesus Glorified, that He has contrived to make it part of this new artifice of love, His sacramental life. As to His humility, He has united in the Blessed Sacrament all His preceding humiliations, with circumstances of abasement peculiar to itself, and in themselves so tremendous that they have sometimes been a stumbling-block to the proud intellect of man. Yet, notwithstanding all His silence and hiddenness, He is so attractive in the Blessed Sacrament, that it is difficult to account for it upon any natural principles. Nothing draws the faithful to churches, feasts, functions, and services, so surely as this most venerable Sacrament. He said while He was on earth, referring to His Crucifixion, When I am lifted up, I will draw all

men unto Me. This is especially true of Him now in the Blessed Sacrament when He is raised on His throne for Exposition or Benediction. And think of Him in His life of glory, worshipped in celestial amazement by the hierarchies of spirits and souls, and then think of Him in the little pyx, why He is there, and how, and under what laws of mysterious abjection, and what must the Blessed Sacrament seem but the very crown of all His inexhaustible unselfishness? In a word, the character of the Blessed Sacrament, *as* the Blessed Sacrament, is precisely the same with the character of the Teacher of Judea and the Sufferer of Jerusalem,—silent, hidden, sweet, patient, humble, attractive, and unselfish.

But the Blessed Sacrament not only combines the characteristics of our Blessed Lord; it also excellently and pre-eminently fulfils His various works within us and without us. We have to declare war against the visible world, its pomps, pageants, pleasures, vanities, and its spirit, which is the negation of the Gospel; and it is by the Blessed Sacrament that we are victorious in this war. We have to fight against the invisible world of demoniacal power; and it is by the strong Bread of the Eucharist that we are conquerors. We have to do battle with the intense corruption and prolific miseries of self; and it is the same mystery which in that conflict also is our all in all. We have to live a life of super natural love; and in the Blessed Sacrament is the fountain from which the waters of continual gladness can alone be drawn to feed that love. Our Blessed Lord crowns in us the grace of all His other Sacraments by the overwhelming and inclusive grace of this. He has to feed in us the various appetites of the spiritual life;

and here is the manna which has all tastes according as the soul may desire. He sows in our bodies the seeds of a glorious resurrection; and His seedtime is communion. Thus it is by the most holy Eucharist that He co-operates with us or of His bounty blesses us in these seven great works, which are set before our souls, and have to be accomplished in the Christian life.

But the grand aim and object of His love of us is our union with Him and His with us; and here is almost the specialty, the distinctive grace of the Blessed Sacrament. There are four sorts of union, in the wide sense of the term, which we possess with Him independently of the Blessed Sacrament. We are united to Him by essence, by presence, and by power, as our omnipresent Creator; and by ordinary grace as our Incarnate Redeemer. But there are five other unions of a closer and more intimate character which are effected by the Blessed Sacrament. There is first of all a closer union between His Divinity and ourselves in the Blessed Sacrament, than the one which exists in virtue of the divine immensity. We receive His Divinity concomitantly with His Flesh and Blood in the Holy Communion; and both our bodies and our souls are filled with inexplicable benedictions because of the mystical contact. Secondly, we have a personal union with Him, as the Eternal Word, as the Son rather than the Father or the Holy Ghost, by which we receive wonderful graces, and augmentation of grace even when the species are gone: thus Cornelius a Lapide says, As food, when it is digested, still leaves in the body its nutritive virtue, so the species of the Eucharist leave their virtue of nourishing unto eternal life, and they leave it after a certain fashion with the

deity of Christ, which remains with grace. Thirdly, there is the sacramental union of His Body, His Flesh and Blood, with us,* which is the direct union effected by the Sacrament in its own right. Fourthly, there is the union of His Soul with ours, as if It stretched itself over ours, as the prophet stretched himself over the dead child, with marvellous vivifying power. Of this "union of the redoubled Soul of Christ," Schram thus speaks:† "Another way in which Christ permanently unites Himself with us in the Holy Eucharist, independently of His union with us by His Divinity, and by His Person, is by His most holy Soul; for when the species are corrupted, and so the Body and Blood have passed away, there is retained a certain *replication* of the Soul of Christ, by which He permanently and after a most special manner unites Himself to perfect souls, and in their measure to the rest of the just; His Soul conjoined to the Word being as it were an immediate instrument of a union more intimate than that effected by the Divinity alone: as Cardinal Cienfuegos teaches in his Vita Abscondita, and Cardinal Belluga in his preliminary judgment of that work." Fifthly, there is a personal presence, accompanied with a great augmentation of grace, which is as it were the odour and impression of His Flesh, Blood, and Soul after the species have departed. Questions of mystical theology are foreign to the present treatise; so we must be content with thus barely naming

* The most perfect discussion of the controversy about the union of the Flesh of Christ with the flesh of the communicant, and the real mind of the fathers on the subject, is to be found in the fourth chapter of the 204th disputation of Vasquez.

† Theolog. Myst. i. 295.

these five unions, though each of them are magnificent and beautiful abysses of redeeming grace.

Some have believed that so dear to Jesus is the union between Himself and the sacramental species that He will preserve it to all eternity. They say that when the last Host is consecrated, after the persecution of Antichrist is over, it will be borne to heaven by a procession of jubilant angels, and will be preserved without corruption, to serve as an eternal monument of the eminent love which Jesus bore His Church.* There is much to be said in the way of fitness both for and against this idea; but as lying beyond the province of theology proper, I leave it, as the authors cited leave it, in the uncertainty of a devout opinion.

But let us look nearer home; what an abyss it is to look into—the occupations of Jesus in our own selves, so long as the species abide! Beatific Vision is actually within us, to angels and to saints. The magnificence of His glory is in our flesh and blood and bone and living soul. He is working there as God: He is working there

* Nouet. Octave du S. Sacrament, p. 34. Lallemant. Entretiens vi. p. 83.

Some theologians have held and defended this opinion. They have rested chiefly on the case of the True Cross eternally reserved in heaven, and on a revelation to St. Veronica di Binasco of solemnities and processions by which the feast of Corpus Christi is observed in heaven. But, 1, the case of the True Cross is doubtful, and Suarez inclines against it: 2, if it were true, it is not parallel; for it is not our Lord Himself: and 3, on examining the revelation it appears that our Lord was in visible glory in the procession, not under the accidents; and 4, private revelations need roomy interpretations. Raynaudus in his Heteroclita attacks the opinion in his own rude way. Pars I., Sect. I. Punct. 7, sub fine. Waldensis maintained that the Host would be kept in the translucent Heart of Mary as a tabernacle.

as man; strange works, and like no other works. He, busy, as it were, is engrossed; we are often heedless and distracted. Whether His efficacy be physical, or moral, or both combined, it is equally wonderful, equally gracious, equally transcendental. O of what wonders are not we the theatre by the love of Jesus! We are lost in God. We are heavens on earth already, we, even we, who miserably know ourselves to be what we really are. Let us collect ourselves within our own souls, and hushing every noise of earthly care and worldly wish, let us refresh ourselves with the odour of Jesus haply still within us, and worship Him in the silent interior temple from which He has but just withdrawn, and where the fragrance of His incense is clinging still to the flesh-built walls. Would that He might hasten the hour when He will dwell within us with an eternal dwelling, the hour when we shall have Him as we never have Him now, have Him so as never to lose Him more!

SECTION V.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT ALL FOR MEN.

THE more we realize the grandeurs of the Blessed Sacrament, the more amazing do they seem, simply as an excess of love to us on the part of our Blessed Lord. It is the characteristic of this devotion that we never become altogether familiarized to it. So long as we are devout at all, it grows upon us like an inexhaustible mystery, like the Beatific Vision itself. For He whom we are loving, and who so unspeakably loves us is the Eternal Word, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity. Indeed the Blessed Sacrament is the Second Person of the adorable Trinity, in His Human Nature, arrayed in the sacramental veils. When we worship the Three Divine Persons co-equal, co-eternal, and con-substantial, we cannot but have a peculiar feeling towards the Son. I do not say a greater love or a more fervent devotion: the idea would at once shock and pain us; but a peculiar feeling, which it is not easy to define. The Eternal Son is the Word of the Father, the expression of His knowledge of Himself, He is uncreated Wisdom, and from Him, together with the Father, the Holy Ghost proceeds. Thus he seems to have, as the Word, a peculiar connection with creatures. Creation is on a finite scale what He is as a living, infinite, and co-eternal Person, the expression of the Divine Perfections.

Moreover He has been especially for men from the

very beginning. He was the Person who was decreed to assume our nature from all eternity. All the Three Persons chose it, blessed be Their infinite condescension! All Three elected Him to assume it. But He, alone, the Second Person, did actually assume it. Out of His predestination come Mary, creation, the Church, and the glories of heaven. He knew us eternally, chose us eternally, loved us eternally, and from all eternity vouchsafed to desire the moment when He should take our nature upon Himself. The foresight of sin only determined Him to do it in a more loving and pathetic way. Hence it is, that while we know by faith that whatsoever God works outside Himself, the same is the work of the whole Trinity, we nevertheless have a peculiar feeling with regard to the Sacred Person, the Eternal Son; for while we distinguish Him in the inaccessible majesty of His co-equal Godhead, we nevertheless remember even then that He is Jesus and that Jesus is He.

Thus He was all for men even before He was actually man. If we take Him at any moment of His sojourn upon earth, He was all for us, and all of Him was for us, and He was our all. This expresses the whole Gospel. He was on earth in a state of suffering and humiliation; and this was on our account. It was a change upon the original decree. Because more was needed now than that the Creator in glory, joy, and radiant majesty should assume a created nature, more was given. There were the passible flesh, the life of ignominy, the mysteries of Gethsemane, and the horrors of Calvary. His Immaculate Mother was what He prized most on earth, and in the very moment of His deepest sufferings, in the very hour of His awful dereliction, He gave her away to us,

to be our Mother as well as His. The glory of His Father was as it were His ruling passion; but that glory was in reality our salvation. He made it His own interest, and His Father's, that He should save souls in the most easy, prodigal, and abundant manner, and that He should multiply beyond all counting the numbers of the redeemed. It was His love of His Father, and His Father's love of Him, and the Holy Spirit's jubilee in Him, to increase in all ways, short of taking from us our free will, the innumerable crowds of us who should be saved and glorified. Everything was turned to us, and made our interest, and treated as our cause. Nay while He was on earth He had an irresistible leaning towards sinners. He seemed to gravitate to them, as if a predilection for them was the genius of His Human Nature; and He did not care to hide it, but freely and quietly let men take scandal at it as they pleased, to the detriment of their own souls. If there was anything on earth low and despised, He was attracted to it. What repels other hearts, from its miserable abjection or uninteresting vileness, drew His like a loadstone. However deep it was, or however dark the depth, He sank to it swiftly and naturally as the stone sinks to the bottom of the lake. And all that He did of this description was meanwhile sowing the seeds of countless generations of large-hearted soul-saving saints, and generous, unjealous, wide-spirited religious orders. For He was God, and dwelt always in the calm possession of His conscious omniscience. So that all that He was always doing was meant foreseeingly for the example of us all; even to the divine wastefulness with which He scattered His Precious Blood on all sides, till His Heart had not another drop to give.

But it might seem that Jesus on earth was naturally all for us; for to that end He vouchsafed to come, and for that end remained on earth His appointed time to teach, to do, and to suffer. The Thirty-Three Years are an historical fact, and like other facts in history come and go, pass and are complete, and have only to be looked back upon. Yet if we look at Jesus Ascended He is as much all for us, and when He was on earth. His Human Nature He retains in His perfection and in the truth of its Humanity to all eternity. This we might have expected. What He once assumed, He was not likely to relinquish. But there are many tokens of His enduring affection which we should not have ventured to anticipate. By a mystery of the most touching love He has retained His Five principal Wounds, in token of His still being all for us. These wounds, as theologians tell us, are His perpetual sacerdotal intercession. Their silent eloquence is for ever speaking to the Father on man's behalf. They glow like radiant suns, as the hymns of the Church speak, and all heaven is filled with the beauty of their mild effulgence. On His mediatorial throne in heaven now He is the living fountain of all grace more universally, more abundantly, more potently, than ever He was on earth. The Church is filled to overflowing with fringes of His garments of all shapes and sizes and kinds, through which virtue is ever passing out of Him into us. There is not a benediction of the Church, whether it light on salt, water, candle, palm, ashes, vestment, sacred vessels, images, or any other matter, but it is full of Jesus, and has its own peculiar grace, and is destined to its own beneficent end. The Church is the multiplication of Jesus, the omnipresence of Jesus, the energy

of Jesus. It is all Jesus. The Church exists not, but in Him and for Him. To use the apostle's word, it is His Body, and so Himself. Earth has no privilege equal to that of being a member of His Church; and they dishonour both it and Him who extenuate the dismal horrors of that outer darkness in which souls lie that are aliens from the Church. The greatness of our privilege, and therefore of the glory of the Sacraments, is necessarily diminished by anything that makes less of the unutterable miseries, and most appalling difficulties of salvation outside the Church.* This is the reason why the saints have ever been so strong in the instincts of their sanctity, as to the wide, weltering, almost hopeless deluge which covers the ruined earth outside the ark. Harsh, to unintelligent uncharitable kindness intolerably harsh, as are the judgments of stern theology, the saints, as a matter-of-fact which I have already noticed, have even felt and spoken more strongly and more peremptorily than the theologians. The more dear to the soul the full light and sacramental life of Jesus, the more utter the darkness, the more dismal the death, of those who are without that light and life, in their fulness and their sacramentality. The eternal possession of Mary's Immaculate Heart, together with all the intelligences of the countless angels, would not suffice to make one adequate

* Of the contrition which will remit sin without the sacrament of confession, the Catechism of the Council of Trent speaks as follows: Ut enim hoc concedamus, contritione peccata deleri: quis ignorat, illam adeo vehementem, acrem, incensam esse oportere, ut doloris acerbitas cum scelerum magnitudine æquari conferrique possit? At quoniam *pauci admodum* ad hunc gradum pervenirent, fiebat etiam, ut a *paucissimis* hac via peccatorum venia speranda esset. *Pars* ii. *cap.* v. *quæs.* xxxvi.

act of thanksgiving for the single comprehensive mercy of being Catholics, and of acknowledging St. Peter's paternal supremacy. It was Jesus Ascended from whom we received this royal grace.

Let us look at the occupations of Jesus Ascended. If He exalts and assumes His Mother, it is for our sake, as well as His own or hers. How little He lets us think of Mary's unrivalled vision and enjoyment of the Most High, and how much He leads us to think of her as the Mother of Mercy, engaged and engrossed, as it would seem, exclusively for us! What effect the affairs of earth are taking on the employments of the whole of heaven! Angels are ministering spirits sent to minister to the heirs of heaven, or offering the prayers of the elect to the Supreme Majesty in their golden thuribles. The souls of the saints are all occupied in their magnificent function of intercession. Into whatever part of heaven we look, the blessed are being busied about our interests; for such is the sweet will of the ascended Jesus. But most of all for us is the very presence of His Sacred Humanity in heaven, worshipping and delighting the Holy Trinity in our name and for our exiled race. Nowhere can angelic nature, singly or combined, make one transient adequate act of worship of God, no act strictly worthy of Him and co-extensive with His dignity. But the human race is doing so all day and night in the Person of the Incarnate Word. God sees us as it were through the medium of His Sacred Humanity, so that everything is tinged and softened by it, and as if it were that Humanity itself; and thus the poor fallen earth is even more beautiful to His complacent eye than when it

lay before Him, young and sinless, and He blessed it for its beauty. Truly Jesus Ascended is all for us.

Nor less all for us is Jesus returned again to us in the Blessed Sacrament. What a mystery this is, looking at it merely as a return, without adverting to its own intrinsic mysteriousness. When He rose, dear Saviour of mankind! He lingered upon earth, as though He was loath to leave it. Who can think of those Forty Days without a hot heart or delightful tears? Then, when He had ascended and placed His Human Nature on the exalted throne due to its eminent merits, His eye was cast downward on His Church, on Stephen before the Council, or Paul on the greensward by Damascus, or wherever else necessity or sorrow drew His loving look. He vouchsafed to seem as if He hankered after earth. Surrounded as He was by spotless sanctity, human and angelic, He still leaned towards the sinful and the low. The angels themselves had caught the spirit of His Sacred Heart. They came to rejoice more over one sinner that did penance than over ninety and nine that needed no penance. Could there be a condescension of a lower depth than this? It is as if He resolved, I am speaking humanly, for He knew no change, nor were His appointments the expressions of a mutable will, nor His plans the caprice of affection or the taking advantage of an occasion—it is as if He resolved to make by means of His Incarnation another disclosure of the divine perfections more wonderful than the Incarnation itself had been, and that this disclosure was the Blessed Sacrament. It appeared as if He could not part with Bethlehem and Egypt, Nazareth and Jerusalem, Gennesareth and Be-

thany, Gethsemane and Calvary, as if He could not forego one mystery of the Three-and-Thirty Years, and therefore by means of His Human Nature and through His omnipotence, He would combine and renew them all; and this combination and this renewal were the Blessed Sacrament. It is as if He would have all worship and all love and all faith and all religion collected and thrown into one mystery, and that single mystery should be His own pre-eminent Self; and this concentration of Himself, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, Babe and Man, glorious and ignominious, on earth and in heaven, Sacrifice and Sacrament, should be the Adorable Host of the altars of the Church.

The magnificence of heaven becomes at once, not a home, but an exile. It cannot help Him to this consummate mystery. It gives Him no occasion; it opens to Him no abyss; it cannot tempt Him with the exquisite bait of manifold humiliation. He turns from it with a look as if it had played Him false and disappointed Him. But earth can promise all He asks, and keep its promise with prodigal abundance. Vast and seemingly interminable as were the depths of its misery and nothingness which He had already filled, fresh abysses of unfathomable nothingness yawned before Him, and wooed Him down into themselves, as the deep of Mary's lowliness had wooed Him to earth before. It made earth seem at once a paradise and a home, and He took glad possession, He the Incarnate Word, of its lowest depths, with the sublime abjection of the Blessed Sacrament

This is a very human way of putting it; and while it is not literally true itself, it places in its only true light

the love of Jesus for us in the Blessed Sacrament. Now He is here, all the world over, in tens of thousands of places, beautifying the world in the sight of God, and winning for it countless, unthought-of blessings. Not in heaven only, but now on earth, and multiplied a million times, He worships the Holy Trinity for us, and a million times worships worthily. His vicinity is an inexpressible support to us in our exile; and while the awful and mysterious way in which He renews His Sacrifice for us in the mass is our daily life and our daily salvation, He allows Himself to be kept for our comfort in worshipping Him; and more especially for the sick and dying; and He goes to them, as He will one day come to us, if St. Barbara be true to her clients, and lets us not die without viaticum, like a Father to His timid little ones who so dreadfully fear to cross the dark gulf to Him. He comes and carries us over in His arms Himself. And where is the gain of the Blessed Sacrament to Him? O if He did not condescend to count our little love His great gain, the gain would all be ours, not His. What a Saviour! What a Sacrament! What a God!

If the Blessed Sacrament is Jesus all for us, is it not the most legitimate of conclusions that we should be all for Him? We should be all for Jesus, if Jesus is our all. And what does this mean? Surely, among other things, that the Blessed Sacrament should be to us just the single overpowering fact of the world. Our hand hold Him; our words make him; our tongue rests Him; our body compasses Him; our soul feels Him; our flesh feeds upon Him, Him, the Infinite, the Incomprehensible, the Immense, the Eternal. Must not all life be

looked at in this light, just as the whole Church lies in this light and has no other? What more attentive, what more reverent, what more familiar, what more timid, what more happy, than the worship of the Blessed Sacrament, and the peculiar practice of the presence of God which it is to all of us! Our whole being from year's end to year's end resolves itself into one double duty, one while praise, and another while reparation, to this Most Holy Sacrament. And what else will the grand ceremony of our entrance into eternity be, but simply the unveiling of the Blessed Sacrament?

I never see the Blessed Sacrament without being reminded of the last judgment of the world. Its very merciful stillness is a continual admonition to me of that resonant pomp and burning majesty. When I hold it in my hands, I can only feel that it is my Judge that I am holding: and this seems to quicken my love rather than restrain it; and communion is the sweeter for being always in viaticum. He comes at my mass as He came at the Annunciation, from heaven, without passing through intermediate space, swifter than lightning, yet so tranquilly. I sink on my knees and worship, as Mary's extasy relaxed and she genuflected to the new-born Babe. And the stillness is so still that I hear therein the clear trumpets of the far-off doom. How different will be the sensible pomp of that magnificent advent! With what ceremonious care theology gathers it all from Scripture! A celestial fire will come forth from heaven, like a gorgeous tempest, as the precursor of the Judge, a type of the fiery spirit of Elias and the Baptist, which will involve the reprobate, and occupy the place

where they are. They will wait there in the fire, the glorious, the jubilant, the vindictive fire. Then will come forth the luminous Cross, the sign of the Son of man in the heavens, beautiful and majestic, borne by angels as a standard, and visible as the rallying point of the brave saints all through the judgment. Next will follow the masses of clouds, to which Scripture so constantly alludes, and to which summer sunsets are the ravishing preludes, supernatural clouds which He lights up and beautifies by His effulgence. They throw His elect into an extasy of joy and terrify the reprobate; for they look like a triumphal car, though He needs them not to lean upon. Meanwhile, clear as the voice of one we love, the wailing blasts of the arch-angelic trumpets, go round the earth, and compass its uttermost ends, compelling the cold graves and the deep sea to give up their dead. His holy angels, all of them, without exception, will be there, not one left in heaven. They will assume lucid bodies, as theologians say, for all in that great pomp is to be sensible, as it was at the Ascension, on which mystery, as the angels themselves said, the second advent should be modelled. Heaven, deserted heaven, will have again the Divine Solitude which reigned there before Creation was. Then in His beauty and His majesty, in the old glory of His Ascension, the Judge Himself will come, with His Mother and His apostolic assessors. Who shall describe His coming? He is borne somehow, as Suarez says, by the choir of Thrones, those beings of overwhelming restful strength and loveliness, resplendent and inexplicable. And here we revert again to the Blessed Sacrament. For it was these very Thrones, as Boudon

tells us, whom Surin saw always around the Host at mass, those very Thrones, in whose society Angela of Foligno* saw Jesus in the Eucharist, and their numbers, said she, were innumerable, thus, by their office connecting the present Sacrifice with the future Doom. His love has contrived to anticipate His second Advent. He has found out a way of being with us, even when He is far from us. To what marvellous artifices has not His Human Nature helped Him! For it is by that nature that He is both Host and Judge. There is not one of us who will not see that pageant of the doom, and play a part therein. And where is He now, on whose beaming Countenance, and flashing Eye, and glowing clouds, and gleaming thrones, all eyes of all men will be turned, all in wonder, some in extatic joy and rapturous love, some in scowling hate and crouching fear? Where is He now? Let us be still, and let the mass go on. This is He, whom presently I must lift from the corporal, and in extreme fear make strangely free with Him, the Church constraining me, and the sweetness of His own command. He is the Judge. O for the next genuflection, to throw into it a yet intenser act of faith and love!

The silence of the Blessed Sacrament seems ever to be saying, Jesus has nothing to think of but you! And the angels say, O happy you! And heaven envies us, and earth rejoices to bear the race of the sons of men. But our own soul! O perverse thing! how little it knows its own happiness! Could any misery be conceived more

* Vita, cap. vii. n. 112.

dreadful than that God should cease to think of us for one moment? We should drop back into nothingness. Or that He should cease to love us? It would be hell. Yet look at Him in this mystery. He puts forth all His omnipotence to hinder our forgetting Him. He exhausts His infinite wisdom to prevent our hearts growing cold towards Him. He comes into our streets, lies upon our altars, causes bells to ring, and thuribles to smoke, so that at every turn we should come across Him. And yet! we who are good, as we call it, who believe, who love, who aim at high things, who wish one day to sit among the seraphim,—how little do we think of Him, how much less do we speak of Him, though we speak so much, how almost less than nothing do we do for Him! Ah Lord! Blessed Sacrament! one thing Thou hast left undone. Thou hast let our frost be stronger than Thy fire; and if it had not been so, there need have been no heaven, for earth would have been already more than heaven; for we should have had all Thy glory, and with Thy glory Thy sweet humiliations too.

SECTION VI.

THE MAGNET OF SOULS.

IT naturally follows from all that has been said, that the Blessed Sacrament is the magnet of souls. There is a mutual attraction between Jesus and the souls of men. Mary drew him down from heaven. Our nature attracted Him rather than the nature of angels. Our misery caused Him to stoop to our lowness. Even our sins had a sort of attraction for the abundance of His mercy and the predilection of His grace. Our repentance wins Him to us. Our love makes earth a paradise to Him; and our souls lure Him as gold lures the miser, with irresistible fascination. This is the attraction on our side. On the other hand, He draws us to Himself by grace, by example, by power, by lovingness, by beauty, by pardon, and above all by the Blessed Sacrament. Every one who has had anything to do with ministering to souls has seen the power which Jesus has. Talent is not needed. Eloquence is comparatively unattractive. Learning is often beside the mark. Controversy simply repels. But the simple preaching of Jesus Christ and Him Crucified, will collect a congregation, fill a Church, crowd the confes sionals, furnish the altar rail, and solemnize a feast, when nothing else will do so. There is not a power on earth to be compared to the simple and unadorned preaching of the Gospel. Sermons on Jesus, and affectionate expositions of His mysteries, will make men perform their ordinary actions and relative duties more

perfectly than direct instructions on those very things All the attraction of the Church is in Jesus, and His chief attraction is the Blessed Sacrament.

The Blessed Sacrament is the property of the souls of men. It belongs to them in a way and with an intimacy which the spirits of the angels cannot share. Nevertheless, there is a great connexion between the angels and the Blessed Sacrament. It is the especial mystery of that Human Nature in which Jesus is Head of the angels. It is one of the mysteries they adore, and humbly desire to look into. They admire it with a special admiration, and follow it all over the world, in the priest's hands, on the throne, in the tabernacle, round the Church, on its obscure visits to the sick, as if they were attracted by it, which they are. It is called angel's food, and the bread of angels; and although they cannot enjoy the proper sacramental union with the Flesh of our dearest Lord, they doubtless feed on it in their intelligences by a kind of mighty spiritual communion. Nevertheless, it is still Human Nature's boon, a favour derived from the eternal choice and preference of our nature, and it is the magnet of human souls. This must always remain true, though there are doubtless many mysterious connections between the Holy Eucharist and the angelic kingdom, of which we are at present wholly ignorant.

It is said that St. Michael revealed to St. Eutropius, the Hermit, that he had been chosen to be the guardian angel of the Blessed Sacrament; and that it had been entrusted to his charge ever since Holy Thursday; and there are also on record several revelations of his to various saints concerning the worship of the Blessed

Sacrament. Some have supposed him to be the angel of the mass referred to in the canon; and he is spoken of at the beginning of mass in the Confiteor, again at the second incensing at the High Mass; and also in the offertory of masses of Requiem. Many saints and servants of God have had a peculiar devotion to the angel mentioned in the canon of the Mass, without deciding on his name or individuality.* Each of the seven angels who stand before the Throne are said to have one of the Sacraments committed specially to their custody. The Eucharist is assigned to St. Michael, Baptism to St. Gabriel, Confirmation to St. Uriel, Penance to St. Jehudiel, Extreme Unction to St. Raphael, Order to St. Sealtiel, and Matrimony to St. Barachiel. It is of course extremely difficult to estimate at their proper value such pious beliefs. There is mostly something divine in them, but, as usual, clouded with uncertainty.

There seems also a strong inclination among the saints to connect the choir of Thrones in some especial manner with the Blessed Sacrament. When St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi goes through the nine choirs to obtain some special grace from each, she says she has recourse to the Thrones to put her into the arms of the Incarnate Word, especially in his sacramental union with His espoused souls.† Angela of Foligno, after her visions, calls the Thrones the "Society" of the Blessed Sacrament.‡ So also Boudon in his life of Surin mentions the continual visions of the Thrones which he had in connection with the Mass.

* Sarconio. Ritratto di S. Rafaele, p. 43. Da Ponto. Life of Azarias Alvarez.

† Vita, cap. xxi.

‡ Vie, cap. vii.

As to the relations between Mary and the Blessed Sacrament, it is impossible to speak of them worthily, and difficult to speak at all. There are two sources from which we learn them, theology and private revelations. We should be out of harmony with the Church if we lightly esteemed these revelations to the saints, especially those which enjoy the countenance of ecclesiastical approval in any of its various degrees. But my object in this treatise has been to follow theology rather than these revelations, and, where I have referred to them at all, I have left them in their own uncertainty. No one can appreciate more highly than I do the devotional beauty and the spiritual value of much that these revelations have been commissioned to tell us. Yet upon the whole, and especially on this subject of the Blessed Sacrament, they are not only less satisfactory than theology, but also less interesting.

There are some theologians who maintain that the Blessed Sacrament was instituted for the sake of our Blessed Lady, principally for her, and more for her than for all the rest of mankind put together. Indeed, this seems to follow from the principles most approved and in commonest usage in speaking of her honour. It is said by most writers that all that Jesus did for us He did for her in a more eminent and excellent way, as when He redeemed her by prevention in the Immaculate Conception. He is said to have loved her more than all else together, and the Blessed Sacrament is the crowning act of His love; and from these two premises the conclusion easily follows that the Holy Eucharist was principally instituted for her, and that in the same sense in which we are indebted to her for the Incarna-

tion, we are also indebted to her for the Blessed Sacrament. The analogies between the Incarnation and the Eucharist, or rather the concentration of the mysteries of the one in the other, makes this doctrine easy of acceptation, in the sense which those who teach it intend to convey.

There are theologians, again, who teach that what our Lord took from Mary at His Incarnation, formed of her purest blood, was never allowed to undergo any change; but that while all else that grew upon Him afterwards might have been subject to natural laws, (which surely we may venture to doubt) what He took originally from her remained, was crucified, buried, and rose again, and hence is actually in the Blessed Sacrament, which, as they further teach, receives a certain peculiar excellence and prerogative from the presence of this original matter of the Incarnation. This will explain the words of St. Ignatius who says that our Lady showed him in the Blessed Sacrament what had been formed from her. His expressions are very remarkable.* "As I was conversing with the Holy Spirit before Mass with the same tears and devotion, it seemed to me that I felt and saw a bright effulgence of the colour of flame, very strange. As I was preparing for the altar, and after I had put on the vestments and was celebrating, there was great inward commotion, with intense weeping and sobbing, and frequent loss of speech. Then I felt and saw our Lady exercising her favourable influence with the Father, so that in the canon of the Mass and in the consecration, I could see and feel nothing except her

* Life ii. p. 80. Orat. Edit. The words in italics are my own.

who is, so to speak, a party to this so great grace, and the gate of it; and I had a spiritual perception of her showing me in the act of consecration the existence of her own flesh in the Flesh of her Son (*that is, the formation from her substance*) with so intimate an intelligence that it cannot be described."

This must not, however, be confounded with an error on this subject on which an attempt was once made to found a false devotion. Father Zephyrinus de Someire, a Franciscan, published a book on the Worship of the Mother of God in the Blessed Sacrament, in which he asserted that part of her flesh and part of her blood were in the Host in their own species; so that we have not only in the Blessed Sacrament her blood turned into the flesh and blood of Christ at the Incarnation, but her very own uncommuted flesh and blood. Christopher de Vega, in his Theologia Mariana, puts forward the same views, and is attacked by Theophilus Raynaud in his Marian Dypticks.* Guido, the Carmelite, in his Summa of Heresies, charges the Greeks with the same error. He says they believe that the remnants of consecrated Bread are the relics of the Blessed Virgin, which he proves to be manifest heresy. Benedict XIV., in his work on the Canonization of Saints,† treats of this false devotion, and shows how it is contrary to the principles of the faith; and he thus concludes, "Therefore it is only lawful to affirm, that there is in the Sacrament the Flesh of Christ assumed from Mary, as St. Ambrose is quoted in the canon, Omnia De Consecrat. Distinct. 2. 'This is My Flesh for the life of the world, and, as I

* Opera, vol. vii. † Lib. iv. pars ii. cap. xxxi. no. 32.

may more wonderfully say, manifestly no other Flesh than what was born of Mary, and suffered on the Cross, and rose from the Tomb, I say, this is the very same.'" Thus the opinion quoted in the preceding paragraph is perfectly accordant with sound theology and the principles of the faith.*

According to some revelations of the saints our Blessed Lady was either present at the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament, or was at least communicated by our Lord. Novatus, on the contrary, thinks this improbable. His reasons, however, are extremely weak; and as there are nothing but probabilities in the matter either way, they seem, in a theological point of view, to incline towards that side of the revelations, independently of the weight of the revelations, as such, however great or small that may chance to be. According to these visions, our Blessed Lady received communion on the Thursday night, and the species was preserved in her un

* The second part of Velasquez' Maria Forma Dei, or De Augustissimo Eucharistiæ Sacramento, is merely a section of his great work, De Maria Forma Dei, which I cannot learn was ever published in extenso. This is, to the best of my knowledge, by far the most voluminous work on the connection between the Blessed Sacrament and our Lady: and it is a most unfavourable specimen. Worthless in theology, weary with its prolix and forced analogies, always straining doctrines and putting the screw on Scripture, it is just one of those books which damages real devotion to our Blessed Lady by the reaction it produces, in common with all attempts to raise that devotion into a category to which it does not theologically belong. To startle by extravagant statements, and then to explain that our strong language does not represent a theological reality, but only an exaggerated figure, is just the way to ruin catholic devotions and so to injure souls. Yet how common it is! Nothing is in reality so strong as plain theology, and it has an intrinsic persuasiveness which nothing can surpass.

corrupted all through Good Friday, and until her next Communion. Indeed there are some theologians who assert that all through the remaining fifteen years of her life, the sacramental species invariably remained in her incorrupt, so that she was a perpetual living tabernacle of her Son, as she had been for the nine months before His birth; and, as I have already mentioned, the erudite Waldo believed that the last Host consecrated on earth would be preserved to all eternity in her transparent Heart in heaven. It is very commonly said that our Blessed Lady combined in herself, besides her own special prerogatives, all the marvellous gifts of the saints, of whom she is the queen; and thus there would be no difficulty in conceding to her what some of those saints have enjoyed, the incorruption of the sacramental species from communion to communion. In the life of Benigne Gojos, the Visitandine of Turin, we read as follows,* "In her latter years the abundance of her tears obliged our humble Benigne to leave the choir as soon as possible and retire to her cell. There she abandoned herself to the transports of a love in which she was as it were liquefied. Her arms were in the shape of a cross; she was upright, and as it were suspended in the air, ever and anon making a genuflection as if she were adoring. There it was that God often renewed in her the impression of His holy Passion; and what is still more admirable, the miraculous duration of the species of the most Holy Sacrament. This favour was at first accorded to her only for an hour; but it was afterwards prolonged from one communion to another."

* Page 450. Turin, 1846.

If our Blessed Lady did thus preserve within herself the sacramental species during Good Friday, then must she have been the theatre of those wonders, already touched upon, and which have no parallel save in the mystery of the Annunciation, and the life of our Saviour in the womb. Nay, they are even more wonderful. Our Lord dwelt within her in passible flesh, even as He had done at the Incarnation. He as it were brought back again and reposed in her Immaculate Heart what had been formed from the blood of that heart itself. He brought it back unchanged, no longer hers, but His, or rather more hers than ever, because it now was His. There He lay hid through all that long night in the covert of His chosen sanctuary. There, as well as amid the olive-trees, He wrestled through His three hours of mental agony. All the interior pains, all the anguish of soul, all that was not outward bodily suffering or the outrage of external circumstances, He went through within His mother; and at last as His precious Blood distilled in mysterious sweat upon the ground, so did that Blood which was in the Host within her by concomitance retire by the secret miracle of the sacramental life. Through the five trials and the seven journeys of the night and morning, He was in her, without blows, or sound, or violence, or stripes, or spittle, or thorns, or wounds, for such things could not touch His sacramental Body; but His Heart went through every phase of that successive agony, draining to the dregs every species of inward shame and horror, anguish and wounded sensibility, humiliation and crucifixion of soul, which can afflict a human heart, miraculously strengthened to endure what else would many times of

its sole self have caused immediate death. He spoke not the seven words within her; but within her in the plenitude of their heavenly graciousness were the beautiful interior dispositions out of which those words were uttered. Still mysteriously all through the day the Blood ebbed from the Adorable Host, so that it ever preserved its truthfulness as being our dearest Lord Himself in the actual state in which He is. The moment of the loud cry came; but in Mary's heart He broke not the breathless stillness of the Sacrament. The soul sank into the ground at the foot of the Cross, and went to dazzle limbus with its brightness, leaving the body on earth equally with itself united to the Divinity. So that moment also He died in Mary, and the Soul that was with the Body in the Blessed Sacrament by concomitance was separated from it. O wonderful fitness! He that began to live in Mary, also died in Mary. Where Body and Soul had been joined, there also were they severed. And what remained in her? United to the Divinity, just the amount of His debt to her, His Flesh alone! And here was a new marvel of the Incarnation; for never had the Body been for one instant before without the soul. Moreover, if the species remained within her always incorrupt from one communion to another, so must the Body and the Soul have been reunited in her by a silent and secret Resurrection. What wonder then that when He ascended, and a cloud received Him out of the sight of men, the apostles should turn with awe and love and docile dependence to their queen, as they walked back to the holy city? for not only was she like to Jesus, and the likeness broke out and bloomed on every feature the more signally now that

He was gone, but also He Himself was within her, having truly left behind in her all that He had taken into heaven, and was at that moment exposing to the triumphant worship of angelic choirs.

If it be true that our Lady was communicated on Holy Thursday, and if it be true that the species remained incorrupt in her from communion to communion, and I own that both the theological and, so to call them, historical probabilities incline me so to believe, then, on no less an authority than that of St. Thomas,* theology and the true doctrine of the holy Eucharist require us to believe that Mary was the scene of these new marvels of the Incarnation. Were ever those words of Solomon† more true of the Incarnate Word than in the Blessed Sacrament in Mary? I was delighted every day, playing before Him at all times, playing in the world; and My delights were to be with the children of men! It is remarkable also as an illustration of the changes in the Host as our Lord's own state changed, that in relating the seven consolations she received in the Blessed Sacrament, Angela of Foligno‡ mentions that when she was following the mass of a wicked friar, she saw our Lord in the Host, first dolorous, bloody, and fastened to the Cross, and afterwards dead upon the Cross. Reguera in his Praxis of Mystical Theology, says it is conformable to right reason to suppose that at least to some chosen few among the saints, our Lord would grant the miraculous duration of the species.

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* Part. iii. quæst. lxxxi. artic. 1, 2, 3, and 4.

† Proverbs viii. ‡ Cap. vii. n. 113.

Our Lady is also said by some theologians, as well as in sundry revelations, to have lived almost exclusively on the Blessed Sacrament, or at least for long times together; and that it drove away from her all sickness and infirmity. Suarez thinks it more probable that our Lord only ate when it was necessary either to conceal His miraculous abstinence or to prove the truth and reality of His Human Nature. Certainly many of the saints have lived for years on the Blessed Sacrament only, and therefore it is likely that our dear Lady had this grace also. The driving away of sickness is another matter. But is it necessary to suppose this as a medicinal gift, or anything more than an honour and a grace? Was it needful in order to drive sickness away from her sinless body, which had compassed God? Was not her gift of original justice of itself sufficient for this? Let us rather put aside this uncongenial supposition of Novatus, and suppose that if our Lady received this grace, she received it as a pure gift of love, and as befitting the dignity of the queen of saints, who should be herself a participator in the gifts of her subjects. Görres says,* "With the saints the Eucharist has often taken the place of bodily nourishment. Ordinary nourishment produces an intimate union between a man's body and external nature. In like manner the Eucharist also, introducing us into a superior region, unites the recipients with God, and makes them participate in His life. In ordinary food, he who eats is superior to what is eaten, and therefore assimilates the

* Mystik. B. ii.

aliments he takes, and communicates his own nature to them. But in the Eucharist the aliment is more powerful than the eater. It is no longer the food which is assimilated. It is on the contrary the food which assimilates the man to itself, and introduces him into a higher sphere. It produces then in some cases as it were a complete change of the whole life. The supernatural life absorbs after a fashion the natural life, and man, instead of living on the produce of earth, lives henceforth on grace and heaven. Food which was heretofore delicious to him, now excites in him nothing but disgust, and the stomach refuses either to receive or to retain it." He then cites various examples, which will serve to illustrate this gift, which we suppose our Blessed Lady to have received.

Nicholas de Flue, after he had embraced the solitary life, lived only on the Holy Eucharist. The rumour of this miracle soon spread through the canton of Underwald, and at first no one believed it. Many imagine that in past ages all news of this kind were received with an easy credulity, which they attribute to the ignorance of the times. But this is a great mistake. In all times the first feeling about such things has been doubt, and a demand for the requisite evidence of the facts. Thus in 1225 Hugh, the bishop of Lincoln, learned that there was a nun at Leicester who had taken no food for seven years, but lived only on the Eucharist, which she received every Sunday. At first he disbelieved it altogether. He then appointed fifteen persons to act as spies upon her for fifteen days, without allowing her ever to be out of their sight. But during the whole time she preserved her usual health and strength,

although without food; and he was thus convinced of the truth of the assertion.

The inhabitants of Underwald did the same thing with Nicholas de Flue. For a month they surrounded his hut, and made sure that he had never eaten food. Nevertheless, the bishop of Constance was still not satisfied, and sent his suffragan bishop to live with the solitary. This bishop, astonished at the strength and vigour of Nicholas after so long an abstinence, asked him what virtue he preferred before all others. Nicholas replied, obedience; whereupon the bishop bade him eat some bread. He obeyed; but he had scarcely swallowed the first mouthful, when violent vomiting ensued. The bishop of Constance was still incredulous, in spite of the testimony of his suffragan, and determined to be an eye-witness himself. He went therefore to Nicholas, and asked him how he could live without eating. The saint replied that when he assisted at mass or received holy communion, he felt a strength and sweetness which satisfied him and did instead of food. More than once he confessed to his intimate friends that meditation alone sometimes produced these results, in such a way that when he was contemplating the Passion of our Saviour, he used as it were to receive the breath of the dying Jesus into his breast, which seemed to penetrate and fortify the whole inner man.

So it was with St. Catherine of Siena. From her childhood, till she was fifteen, she took nothing but a little red wine mixed with water, and a small piece of food. After that age she confined herself to water herbs, and bread. At the age of twenty she left off bread, and then all external food, without her health

being the least affected by it. The only consequence was a much more ardent desire of frequent communion. This divine food, while it kindled the more intensely the flames of her love, rendered her life of exile from her Beloved all the more sorrowful; so that whenever she communicated she was overwhelmed with sadness. Nevertheless, she received at the same time unspeakable consolations, which took away from her not only the desire but even the ability to swallow food; and when she tried to eat anything, she suffered dreadful pains, and was violently sick. This extraordinary phenomenon naturally attracted the attention of her relations and friends. They spoke to her confessors, who, not knowing what to think, several times ordered her to eat something; but each time the attempt nearly cost her her life. Time after time she sat down to table with the rest and forced herself to eat, but she had scarcely taken the food into her mouth when she was obliged to reject it with torments so horrible that they bred compassion in all who beheld her. After many attempts they left her in peace, and she then took nothing but plain water. In the presence of others she attributed this to her sins; but every time she received holy communion, it imparted to her an incredible strength. Often the mere sight of the Host, or of a priest who had said mass that morning, produced in her the same effect. More than once when she was fainting from exhaustion, her strength would come back suddenly, and she would perform without the least fatigue works of charity of the most painful description.

St. Rose of Lima is another instance of the same grace. When she went to communion she appeared like an angel; so that the priest was stupefied. If any one asked

her what effects the Blessed Sacrament produced in her, she stammered and said she had no words to express them, but that she seemed to pass entirely into God, and was inundated with such joy that nothing in common life could be compared to it. This divine nourishment satisfied and strengthened her to such a degree that when she returned from church, her step was firm and agile, whereas when she went to church she was often obliged to stop to take breath, so exhausted was she by fasting, watching, and other mortifications. Her relations at once perceived the effects of the Blessed Sacrament upon her; for as soon as she came home, she went into her room, and remained there till night. In the evening when they asked her to eat something, she replied that she was so full she could not eat anything. Once she passed eight days without eating anything; and whenever the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for the Forty Hours adoration, she passed the whole of that time on her knees in adoration.

When the Blessed Lidwine was asked where her blood came from, seeing she never ate anything, she replied, Whence comes the sap in spring, seeing the winter has dried and killed it? And she added that she gained more strength in one good meditation than others in the most nutritious food. St. Angela of Foligno lived for twelve years on no other food than the Holy Eucharist. So it was with St. Colomba of Rieti, Domenica del Paradiso, who ate no other food in Lent, and the holy bishop St. Modoc, who spent forty days with no food but the Blessed Sacrament, and then appeared more robust than ever At Norfolk there was a devout maiden, popularly called Jane the *Meatless*, because she had lived on the

Blessed Sacrament alone for fifteen years. Sister Louisa of the Resurrection, a Spanish nun, lived for many years on the Holy Eucharist. The same was the case with St. Colette, Helena Encelmina, the abbots Ebrulph and Fantinus, Peter of Alcantara, and several who are mentioned in the lives of the Fathers of the desert. We may therefore well believe of their Queen, what has been so far from uncommon with the Saints.

There is a tradition that mass was said, at which our Lady communicated, every morning during the Forty Days of our Lord's Risen Life; and we are also told that at the close of her life she communicated in Viaticum, though hers was no dark gulf which she had to cross in order to regain our Lord in a blissful eternity. Of course, no creature ever approached so nearly to making a strictly worthy communion as the Immaculate Mother of God.*

* "To these two exercises, the one of charity towards her neighbour and the other of compassion for Jesus Christ, her Son and her God, she added a third, and this was, to receive the Sacred Body of her Blessed Son, consecrated by the words which He ordained. Mass was said for her by her blessed son and chaplain, the evangelist St. John; and he communicated and she communicated, and happy was he who merited to be the acolyte and to serve that mass and to hold the communion cloth for Our Lady when she received Our Lord.

"Oh! that there might cleave to us, when we hear of so devout a communion, some little of the overflowings of the devotion which the Virgin felt. What must have been the reverence of this most lowly soul, who, when she looked upon herself, did not reckon herself worthy of the morsel of bread, which was her nourishment, or to tread the ground on which she walked! With what gratitude and love she must have received the Body of her most holy Son, since, as Man, He was one flesh with her, and, as God, she was one spirit with Him, and from these two sources there sprang a love inseparable and unspeakable, uniting her to God, and changing her daily more and more into that Lord whom she received, and strengthening her, above every

Yet, of necessity she fell short. Even a million years of her stainless and heroic sanctity would be an inadequate preparation to ensure a reception of the Blessed Sacrament, altogether and strictly worthy of the gift to be received. It was for her mainly that it was instituted. To her it gave gifts and graces such as it imparted to no other. She had in many more ways to do with the Blessed Sacrament than all the rest of creatures. Yet there has been only one communion literally worthy, our Lord's Communion of Himself. The Blessed Sacrament worships the Holy Trinity worthily for us all day and night; it has had but one act of worship worthy of itself, and that was when He, whose own Self it is, received it with joy unutterable back into Himself.

Having spoken of the angels and the Blessed Sacrament, and our Lady and the Blessed Sacrament, we come naturally to speak of the relations between the saints and the Blessed Sacrament. We have in some measure anticipated this, but there is still much to say. Indeed, if we look at the saints collectively it will seem as if their interior life was mainly the worship of the Blessed Sacrament, while their external apostolic labours or works of mercy drew their motives, their strength,

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other devotion, to support her exile; in that she had present and received within her breast the Beloved of her heart; and though she saw Him not face to face as she desired and hoped to see Him in heaven, yet He, her duteous Son and Lord, was wont to manifest Himself to her in the Sacrament, such as at the moment she might wish to see Him, now, as when He came forth from her hallowed womb, and now, as when she held Him in her arms and gave Him suck, and so on, according to the various states in which she had beheld Him during His life."—Juan de Avila, Obras. vii. p. 350 Tratado de la Assumpcion.

their perseverance, and their heroicity, from the same burning source of Incarnate Love. All classes of the elect have gathered round the Blessed Sacrament to worship It in their measure and degree. The inventions of their devotion have been numberless. A whole book would not contain them. The city of Rome, the pontiff and the populace alike, has always put itself at the head of this devotion. Peter's City is eminently the City of the Blessed Sacrament. Visions, voices, prodigies, and miraculous Hosts, are ever occurring in the higher spheres of catholic sanctity, and feed there the mystical life of contemplation on which all the active strength of the Church depends.

But there is between the saints and the Blessed Sacrament a kind of double attraction, or if we may venture to use in these days a word which the usuage of some great mystical theologians has consecrated, a sort of double magnetism. The Blessed Sacrament attracts the saints in certain wonderful ways: while on the other hand the saints have sometimes the power to attract the Blessed Sacrament. If the sense of sight, says Görres, can perceive sins concealed in the folds of the human heart, it is not astonishing that it should distinguish what is holy even behind the veil which hides it. This marvellous faculty of the saints is principally applied to the Blessed Sacrament. It is because of this that we read so often in the lives of the saints that our Lord has appeared to them in such or such a form, and most often in the guise of an infant. Something of this kind happened in the time of St. Louis of France, who refused to go into the chapel to see it, because he said miracles were not needed by those who already believed. Our

Lord appeared as a child to St. Ida three times successively, and each time greater than before, and she was deluged with joy for forty days. St. Veronica of Binasco, saw Him with her bodily eyes, all environed with angels. She saw at the same time, above the chalice, something which shone with a marvellous brightness, but she could not distinguish what it was. Vaulem, the Cistercian, saw in the Host the Infant Jesus, holding in His hand a crown of gold adorned with precious stones. He was whiter than snow, His countenance serene, and His eyes sparkling. When Peter of Toulouse was holding the Host over the chalice at mass, the Infant Jesus appeared to him in marvellous beauty. Frightened at the brightness, he shut his eyes; but the vision still continued. He turned his head aside; but still he saw our Lord, sometimes on his hand, sometimes on his arm, whichever way he turned. The same thing happened to him almost every day for three or four months. A parish priest at Moncada, in the kingdom of Valentia, was tormented by doubts about the validity of his ordination. One Christmas day, while he was saying mass, a little girl four years and a half old saw a Babe in his hands, instead of the Host, at the elevation. He bade her watch the next day, and the same thing occurred. Not content with that, he took with him to the altar three altar breads, consecrated two of them, communicated with one of them, and then showed the other two to the child. She at once perceived the same vision in the consecrated Host, but not in the other.*

Similar things are related of St. Angela of Foligno,

* Raynaldus. Annales, sub anno 1392.

St. Hugh of Cluni, St. Ignatius, St. Lidwine, Domenica del Paradiso, and many others. Our Lord often appeared in the Blessed Sacrament to St. Catherine of Siena, and under different forms. But she almost always saw angels holding a veil of gold, the symbol of the mys tery, and in the midst a Host with the semblance of an Infant. Sometimes she saw the angels and saints adoring our Lord on the altar. Sometimes He appeared to her all on fire; and then she saw herself, the priest, and our Lord, in the midst of flames. Sometimes a light shot from the altar and illuminated the whole Church. Another time when the priest was dividing the Host, she saw how the entire Body of our Lord was under each part. Our Lord did not always appear to her of the same age.

Mary of Oignies often saw at the elevation our Lord under the form of an infant surrounded by angels. When the priest communicated, she saw our Lord descend into his soul and fill it with marvellous brightness. If he communicated unworthily, she saw our Lord indignantly leave his soul unenlightened and obscure. Even when she was in her cell, persons could see by the extraordinary changes manifest in her, that she felt our Lord's presence on the altar. She sometimes saw Him under the form of a lamb or a dove. He showed Himself to her on all His feasts under a form analogous to the mystery commemorated. At Christmas she saw Him as an infant on His Mother's lap, and at Candlemas in the arms of Simeon. One Candlemas He lighted her candle for her, when it had gone out. In Passion-tide she saw Him on the Cross; but this was rare, as it excited her feelings too keenly. In the same way when

Extreme Unction was administered to any one, she saw Him spread Himself through their limbs like a light. She often prayed for a priest of her acquaintance; in gratitude for which he said mass for her. When he had finished, she said, This mass was for me. The priest in much astonishment asked her how she knew it. She replied, I saw a dove descend on your head at the altar, and extend its wings towards me; and I understood it to be the Holy Ghost bringing the fruits of the mass. Ordinarily speaking, when mass was said by a holy priest, she saw the angels all bright with joy.

Sometimes our Lord is visible to all present. Cantipratensis relates that in the Church of St. Amat at Douay in Flanders, a priest, having let a Host fall, went down on his knees in dreadful consternation to take it up. Meanwhile he saw it lift itself from the ground, and lay itself on the purificatory. He immediately called the canons, who beheld a beautiful infant lying on the cloth. The people pressed round to see the miracle, and were all witnesses of it. Cantipratensis, having heard of this, came to Douay, and as he knew the dean of the Church, he prayed him to let him see the miracle. The dean opened the tabernacle, and the crowd approaching cried out, Ah! look, look at our Lord: I see Him. Cantipratensis saw nothing but a Host; and yet he was not conscious of any secret sin which hindered him from seeing what others saw. But all at once his eyes were opened, and he beheld the countenance of our Lord, of mature age, and the size of life. He had a crown of thorns upon His head, and two drops of blood trickled down His brow. He prostrated himself immediately and burst into tears When he rose again, he saw neither

blood nor crown, but only the figure of a man turned to the right, so that the right eye was hardly visible. He was beautiful and radiant; His forehead high, His nose long and straight, His eyes downcast, His hair floating over His shoulders, His beard long, His cheeks thin, and His head bent. During this time others saw Him under different forms; some fastened to the cross; others as the sovereign judge of the living and the dead; but most as an infant. Such is the narrative of a man perfectly worthy of belief as an eyewitness, however uncritical as an historian, relating with the greatest detail what he saw with his own eyes. Many other facts of a similar nature are related in credible histories, especially instances of the species of wine appearing as blood and the species of bread as flesh.*

But it is not only by sight that the Blessed Sacrament attracts the saints. Some have the gift of feeling our Lord's sacramental presence by a sort of spiritual perception; and that even at great distances. Ida of Louvain felt our Lord's presence at consecration, at the moment when He descended on the altar. When a server once by mistake gave the priest water instead of wine, so that there was no consecration, St. Colette perceived it, although at a considerable distance. Juliana, the Cistercian, when her friend Eva came to visit her, often perceived that the Blessed Sacrament was being taken out of the church of St. Martin after the divine office, though it was at a great distance, and she used to be overwhelmed with sadness each time. The Franciscans of Villonda one day invited a holy Carmelite of

* Most of these instances are taken from Gorres, Christliche Mystik, scattered through the third, fourth, and fifth books.

the name of Casset to visit them, and in order to try him, they took the Blessed Sacrament out of the tabernacle in which it was usually kept, and placed it elsewhere. They put no light before it, but left the lamp burning as usual befor the customary altar. Casset, entering the church first as was his custom, and seeing his companion genuflect before the High Altar, said to him, The Body of our Lord is not there, but in yonder place where there is no lamp; for the friars, who are now hidden behind the grating in front of the high altar, have taken the Blessed Sacrament away in order to try us. St. Francis Borgia had the same gift; and when he entered a church he went straight to the place where the Blessed Sacrament was, even when no outward sign betokened its reservation there. Jane the Meatless, the Norfolk maiden, could distinguish a consecrated Host amid numbers that were unconsecrated. Gerson mentions a man who could detect the Blessed Sacrament by the sense of smell.*

On the other hand, the mystical attraction seems sometimes to reside in the saints themselves, and it is rather they who attract the Blessed Sacrament than the Blessed Sacrament them. Thus Veronica of Binasco often attracted the Blessed Sacrament to herself through

* Gorres gives the following examples of the saints. 1. *Those who could feel the Blessed Sacrament.* Mary of Agreda, St. Rose of Lima. 2. *Those who could taste it.* Lucy of Adelhausen, Angela of Foligno, Ida of Louvain. 3. *Those who could smell it.* Giles of Rheggio, Catherine of Siena, St. Philip Neri, Herman Joseph. 4. *Those who heard it.* Jerome Gratian, Henri Suso, Joseph of Cupertino. 5. *Those who could see it.* Joseph of Cupertino, Veronica of Binasco, Peter of Toulouse, Catherine of Siena, Mary of Oignies, &c.

the air from the altar.* One day St. Theresa was lifted up from the ground in an ecstasy at the moment of communion, and the priest could not reach her to give her the Host. Suddenly he saw it escape from his fingers and lay itself on the tongue of the saint. The same thing happened to Elizabeth of Jesus, whose confessor by way of mortification had forbidden her to go to communion. While the priest was communicating the other sisters, he saw a Host fly from his hand into the mouth of Elizabeth. The Blessed Raymond of Capua relates that once when he had just returned from a journey, S. Catherine of Siena expressed an intense desire to go to communion. As he was very tired, he wished not to go to the altar just yet; but yielding at length to the importunity of the saint, he said mass. When he came to give her communion, he saw her face all radiant as an angel's; whereupon he said inwardly to the Blessed Sacrament, Go, Lord! and find your betrothed! and instantly the Host he was about to take up flew to Catherine. He also said that he had heard persons of both sexes, whose word he could trust, say that they had often seen the Blessed Sacrament fly into her mouth as she was approaching the altar to communicate. A priest remarked more than once in giving communion to St. Hippolytus, that the Host escaped from his hands, attracted by the saint as the loadstone attracts iron: and that when this happened his face which had been shining became suddenly as white as snow. Simon of Alne going one day to communion, the Host he was about to receive fell to the ground

* Bollandist. ap Jan. xiii.

The priest was about to take it up, when Simon begged him to wait a moment till he had asked God whether it was his sins which had caused it to fall. That instant the Host rose from the ground and flew into his mouth.

Rader in his Bavaria Sacra tells the following story of the princess Margaret and her chaplain. While he was giving her communion, he saw her face, which was ordinarily pale, shining with excessive brightness. He was seized with fear; and when his panic had subsided, he could not find the Host which he was about to give her. Believing it had fallen from his hands in his fright, he made a scrupulous search for it. But it had flown into Margaret's mouth simultaneously with the wonderful light which had appeared on her face. This attraction sometimes operates from a great distance. Veronica Giuliani often wished to receive communion; and it not unfrequently happened that she placed herself at the window, and when the priest at the altar divided the Host, a particle would fly away into her mouth, and then she would fall into an ecstasy. The sisters often saw her in this state without knowing the cause. This method of communion lasted nearly all her life, at least when the mass was said by the priest Thaddeo, who never observed the missing particle. The same happened to Ida of Louvain, whose intense desire to communicate, attracted a particle of the Host at the priests' communion, and she knew that she was communicated, rather by taste and feeling than by sight. On one occasion the Host was brought her by a dove.

Our Lord, or the angels and saints, have often performed the functions of the priest. But one of the most remarkable and authentic instances of this attract-

ing of the Blessed Sacrament by the saints is to be found in the deathbed of S. Juliana Falconieri; and although it is so well known I will extract it from her life.* On one account she was inconsolable, and this was, that being in the habit of refreshing herself several times in the week with the Eucharistic Food, it was not granted to her in the last moments of her life, on account of her continual nausea, to receive Jesus in His Divine Sacrament. Her confessor, and those who surrounded her bed, comforted her, and told her to remember the dereliction of which the same Divine Jesus complained on the Cross, entreating her to acquiesce in the Divine Will, and to offer these same desires to our Lord, by which she might in part satisfy her mind, as she could do no more. The saint being tranquillized by their words, and having received with signs of humility and resignation the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, turned, as it is related, to the other side of her little bed; and overcoming with great delight the torments of her agony, she began to entertain herself in sweet colloquies with her guardian angel, begging his assistance; and to call to mind the sorrows of our Blessed Lady, in memory of which she wore the habit of the Servites; remembering also the precious and happy death of the Blessed Alessio, her uncle: and she was visited at this last hour by angels in the form of white doves, and by Jesus Himself under the appearance of a very beautiful infant, who crowned her with a charming odoriferous garland of flowers of paradise; and entertaining herself a little in this last thought,

* Oratorian Edition, p. 383.

she again broke out into sighs and sobs, grieving that she could not at least satisfy her eyes, since nothing more was allowed her, with the sight of Jesus in His Adorable Sacrament. She was afflicted, and earnestly begged to see Him, saying that death would be very bitter to her, if the Sacred Host were not first brought near her bed.

This wish of the saint appeared good to Father Giacomo, director of the nuns, and to the others, and wishing to give her this last spiritual consolation, they caused the Sacred Host to be brought into her presence, in looking at which, all on fire with a most ardent love, she several times tried to leap from her bed and to prostrate herself before it, but to her great sorrow her weakness did not allow it. But at last she gained sufficient strength, for what cannot an ardent love effect? to succeed in throwing herself out of bed, and stretching herself on the floor in the form of a cross, humbly adoring her God. At that moment her pallid countenance, emaciated by her long and painful sickness, recovered its colour and beauty, so that her face seemed like that of an angel, and on it was expressed that intense desire which she had to feed upon this Heavenly Bread, not being allowed to partake of it. But as it is the property of love not to be satisfied till it attains the full possession of the beloved object, she began to think of all the means by which she might at least gratify herself by giving Him a most humble kiss. But the priest would not allow it. She begged him therefore to place the Sacred Particle on her breast for a short time, that her heart might receive some refreshment from its vicinity to Jesus, with whom it earnestly desired to unite itself.

Her tears, and the affecting manner in which she asked this favour, and above all things, the knowledge of her many virtues, and of the love which inflamed her, induced the good priest to grant her petition; and having washed her breast, she caused a veil to be placed upon it, and over that the corporal on which the priest placed the Sacred Host. Scarcely had he placed it on the chaste bosom of the loving virgin, than languishing with love and collecting the small remains of her strength to speak, she exclaimed, O my sweet Jesus! and in saying this she sweetly and quietly expired. But in drawing her last breath, the Most Sacred Host disappeared from her breast, and entered into it, leaving a mark on her bosom like the crucifix of an altar-bread. So that as Jesus under the veil of the Host had comforted her in her passage, He also accompanied her to heaven.

One more instance from Görres* shall complete my chain of examples. In consequence of the great pain she was suffering, St. Catherine of Siena on one occasion asked her confessor to delay his mass a little, as she had to communicate at it. But she was not able to go to the church as soon as she expected, and when she got there it was so late that her companions advised her not to go to communion; for they knew that she always had three or four hours ecstasy afterwards, and the time for shutting the church would arrive before she had come to herself. The saint was half persuaded, and Raymond began his mass. As she was kneeling at the other end of the church, he did not perceive that she was present. But when he wished to break the Host into two pieces,

* B. iv. 3, Sinne und Wahrnehmun-svermogen.

previous to detaching the Particle to put into the chalice, the Host broke into three, not two pieces, one of the three not larger than a bean. This last Particle leaped into the air above the chalice; and he did not see it fall, but supposed that the whiteness of the corporal hindered his perceiving it; and so he continued his mass. After communion he carefully looked for it; but with all his pains he could not find it, and so was obliged to conclude his mass. When all had retired, he examined with great attention the corporal, the altar, and the ground near the altar; but nothing was to be found. He was so miserable that he confided his grief to Father Christopher, the prior, and they determined to interrogate the saint. They went therefore to her house, but found she had been gone to the church long since; and there, in truth, they found her on her knees in an ecstasy. When she came to herself, Raymond told her what had happened. She smiled and said, Have you looked thoroughly? He replied that he had. Why then, said the Saint, do you disquiet yourself so much? Raymond, at once suspecting what had happened, said, My Mother, you have taken the Particle of my Host. My Father, she rejoined, do not accuse me. It is not I but Another who has done this. I tell you you will never find the Particle. Raymond insisted on knowing how it had happened; and Catherine replied, My Father, be not sad. It was our Lord who took pity on me and brought me the Particle Himself, and with His own hand communicated me. Rejoice then with me; for you have suffered no loss, and I have had a great gift, for which I would fain spend all this day in praising and thanking God.

There is still another double attraction of the Blessed Sacrament, on which a few words should be said. As the saints are connected with the Blessed Sacrament in all these wonderful ways, which are extraordinary gifts and graces, and exceptions to the daily customs of our most patient Lord in His mystery of love, so He has deputed a whole caste of men who should be officially at once the guardians and the masters of His Body. If the Holy Eucharist was instituted for Mary, so the priesthood was created for the Holy Eucharist. Our whole life as priests resolves itself into duties and ceremonies with regard to it. To that end we are deputed. We are taken out of the world and set apart. The mark of Jesus Christ is put upon us, and the spirit of the world, and the ways of the world, and the allowable things even of the world, are to us what they are not to others. We have to enter the Holy of Holies daily, in one way or another. We have to handle God, and to be ready at all moments to wait upon and carry about and administer the infinite substantial purity of the Most High. An invisible character has been sculptured upon our soul by the chisel of the Holy Ghost, that we may be the property of the Blessed Sacrament for ever. Our hands have been anointed to touch Jesus. Even He Himself in the holy oil of Extreme Unction shrinks from the spot where that other greater unction went before. There is not a nun on the Quirinal who is so much or so truly a Sacramentine as we priests are, all of us. None of the mystical wonders of the saints are to be compared to ours. They attract Him from the tabernacle; we from heaven. He raises Himself from the corporal and lays Himself upon their tongues; we lift

Him up, and break Him into three pieces, and He remains unbroken, and He loves us for what we dare to do. We bid Him go to the garrets of dying sinners, and He obeys. We lay Him on the tongues of dreadful, polluted, but secret sinners, and He makes no sign of His repugnance. What are the marvels of the saints to these? The Fraction of the Host is more than all of them collectively; and then there is still left the wonder of wonders, the Consecration.

O what are we, and what should we be? Mary drew the Eternal Word down from heaven once, while we draw Him daily. She bore Him in her arms till He grew beyond it; but with us His Sacred infancy is prolonged throughout our lives. Can we look into our Mother's face and tell her we are in this way greater than she, and then not think of the holiness our dread office requires? To Jesus Himself we are Mary, and Joseph, and the apostles, and the evangelists, and if His dear Sacrament require it, the company of martyrs also: while to the people we are as Jesus Himself. With us priests, self-preservation is but the second law of our nature; the preservation of the Blessed Sacrament is our first. O how happy would the slow martyrdom of our unworldly lives be, did we but strive after sacerdotal holiness! If we attract the Blessed Sacrament even so far off as the throne of God in heaven, ough we not to feel His corresponding attraction in ou. hearts? The attraction of the Holy Eucharist is our vocation, our ecclesiastical spirit, our sanctity, our joy. The fires of hell cannot burn the characters out of our souls. The splendours of heaven will but light it up with more excessive beauty. Mary there is our first

devotion; Joseph is our second; our fathers the apostles are our third; and who can discern, for the blood of self-sacrifice makes them both alike, between the spirit of the martyrs and the spirit of ecclesiastics? O n what a close union with Mary ought we not to live, to lean upon her power, to imbibe her dispositions, to learn how to minister to Jesus, to handle Him gently, and to worship Him with whole and undivided hearts! St. Ignatius says he saw nothing but Mary all through the canon: how shall we say mass without her? When we bear the Blessed Sacrament about from the tabernacle to His throne, from the altar to the altar-rail, from the Church to the sick, and above all in that overwhelming privilege, a procession, shall we not reel and totter if Joseph be not at our side the while? Mary has abandoned her Babe to us, with a reality of which the favours of S. Cajetan and others into whose arms she gave Him were but merest figures; for it was not Himself they held, as He really is. That is the solitary grandeur of the Blessed Sacrament. When S. Angela of Foligno, assisted at the mass of an unworthy priest, at the Fraction of the Host she heard a low voice of murmuring, piercing sweetness thus complain, "Alas! how they break Me and make the Blood flow from My limbs!" Ah! my Fathers and Masters, my Brothers in this intolerable grace! do we not each of us know in his own secret soul at least one priest, and that there can be but one, who, if he had his due, could never break the Host without having his own heart broken also by the [illegible]utable sweetness of that plaintive cry?

SECTION VII.

THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH.

If the Blessed Sacrament is the greatest work of God, the most perfect picture of Him, and the most complete representation of Jesus, it must needs follow that it is the very life of the Church, being not only the gift of Jesus, but the very living Jesus Himself. This is true, whether we look at the Blessed Sacrament in our relation to it, or in its relation to us; in other words, whether we look at it as a devotion or as a power; and it is twofold as a devotion, and twofold as a power, in that it is both Sacrifice and Sacrament.

Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is the queen of all devotions. It is the central devotion of the Church. All others gather round it, and group themselves there as satellites; for others celebrate his mysteries; this is Himself. It is the universal devotion. No one can be without it, in order to be a Christian. How can a man be a Christian who does not worship the living Presence of Christ? It is the devotion of all lands, of all ages, of all classes. National character makes no impression on it. It is not concerned with geography, or blood, or the influence of government. It suits no one rank, or trade, or profession, or sex, or individual temperament, more than another. How can it, for it is the worship of God turned into a devotion by the addition of the sacramental veils? It is, moreover, our daily devotion. All times are its own. As a sacrifice, it is the daily expiation, and as a sacrament, the daily bread of the

faithful. It is the cause and the object of many religious orders, whose whole lives and energies it simply engrosses to itself. There is incessant adoration of it ever going on in the Church; there are many cities where the Blessed Sacrament is only taken down in one Church when it is put up in another, and night and day the inhabitants watch and pray before it. In many convents, through the silent night, gentle Victims of reparation weep and worship before the lonely tabernacle. In many countries pious seculars, men and women, are banded in associations to take hours of adoration in succession, wherever they may be. Here and at the antipodes, if we count both sides of the earth at once, through the four-and-twenty hours there is uninterrupted mass. And what with preparation for mass and communion, and what with thanksgiving, if we could see the whole world at any given hour, we should see multitudes deeply absorbed in the Blessed Sacrament. Nor less wonderful is its power over private life. It is at all hours making all men happier, because it is hindering sin, sweetening bitterness, calming angry tempers, soothing sorrows, and engendering countless works of mercy. Social life, with marriage and its domestic institutions, is always feeling its hallowing influence; and it is ever multiplying peace in the political world between governments and the governed. It can even attract heretics by a kind of spell, and in gentle but erring hearts it silently preaches itself, sweetly constraining more souls into Peter's fold than the close reasonings of the controversialist or the greater influence of the hot words of a true preacher of Jesus Crucified. Its alliance with the deep spiritual life of interior souls

is unbroken, and is continually leading to the heights of self-renunciation and the wonders of supernatural prayers. The ordinary world, the moral, social, political, literary, devotional, ecclesiastical, and mystical worlds, —the Blessed Sacrament is brooding over them all with fertile, pacific, and creative power throughout the mighty centuries. O silent whirlpool of divinest love! how calmly and strongly art Thou ever drawing Thy creatures within the bosom and the inner circles of Thy gracious influence! O swiftly and surely and compassionately draw us down into the depths of everlasting love, down to the very Vision of the most dear and glorious Trinity! Thy name is Jesus; for Thou shalt save Thy people from their sins.

But the Blessed Sacrament is not only the devotional life of the Church; it is also in itself a lifegiving power. Indeed it seems to embrace the whole Church and make itself coextensive with all the wants of redeemed but exiled humanity; and it does this in a sevenfold manner, by Mass, by Communion, by Benediction, by the Tabernacle, by Exposition, by Viaticum, and by Procession. These are the seven principal mysteries of our Sacramental God; and each of them has a spirit of its own and a way of its own, making it as discernible from the rest, as one mystery of the Thirty-Three Years is different from another. A whole treatise would be required to do justice to this single branch of my subject; but no room is now left for more than a mention of these seven mysteries.

First and foremost is the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, where God Himself is both Victim, and Priest, and the Majesty to whom it is offered. It is a true

expiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead, not a shadow of the Sacrifice of the Cross, but the very self-same, renewed and continued in unbloody mysteries. In itself it is infinite, and is only limited by our own fervour and devotion. If we look at the creation of God, we shall find it owing to God four infinite debts, not one tithe of any one of which could it ever pay. It owes God infinite praise, because of His boundless perfections, infinite expiation because of its innumerable sins, infinite thanksgiving because of His immeasurable mercies, and infinite petition because of its endless necessities. Not the Immaculate Heart of Mary with the wide realms of angelic sanctity, all multiplied a thousand-fold, could pay any one of these infinite obligations. But the Sacrifice of the Mass pays them all ten thousand times a day, and each single time supereminently and superabundantly. Through it come all the graces earth receives. We have never had a grace which did not come to us through the Mass. Numberless temporal calamities are averted by it daily all over the world. From it is continually rising up to the Majesty of the Most Holy Trinity a perpetual incense of adoration, intercession, thanksgiving, satisfaction, and supplication, itself in man's imperfect words equal in worth to the worth of the uncreated God. Multiplying words will not enable us to say more. Everything, as St. Thomas shows, which is either said or done at mass is a celestial mystery; and like all other things in the world, it has its own angel, whose powerful name and surpassing glory are not revealed, but who bears the oblation to the throne above. The Sacrifice, as it proceeds, exhibits the History of our Saviour's

Passion, sets forth the resurrection of the redeemed soul, and pictures the fate and fortunes of the Mystical Body of Christ. In a word, the earth lives and moves and has its being in the Sacrifice of the Mass. There is no good on earth, of which it is not the sufficient cause. There is no stay put to the ravages of hell, but through the Mass. There is no alleviation in Purgatory which is not distilled like balm from its abundant chalice. There is no increment of heavenly glory, but through the Sacrifice, and no new inmate of heaven whom the Mass has not landed in his secure immortal rest.

Communion is the second sacramental mystery. Theologians truly say that the greatest action of worship which a creature on earth can pay to His Creator, is to receive Him as his food in this tremendous mystery. When therefore we reflect that Communion is to the whole spiritual world among men what food is to the natural world, we shall perceive the way in which it is at all hours acting with divine force and in innumerable holy manifestations upon the whole race of man. If we take up a long and minute life of a saint, it sometimes almost scares us to see how much went to complete his sanctity. What seas of temptations he went through! What armies of difficulties! What cruel derelictions, what weary labours, what fearful mortifications, what long years, what diversified trials! And it seems as if he could have been spared none of them, if he was to be the saint he was. Yet one single Communion contains grace enough of its own self to make us saints, if our fervour would only drink deep enough of its inexhaustible fountains. The mercy of God, which called

us out of nothing and gifted us with free-will, has thereby caused us to run the risk, and the possible sight of His blessed Self makes it a risk a good man likes to run, of being lost eternally. This risk involves also long perseverance in cares, pains, woes, labours, dissatisfactions, and disappointments. Yet it would have been a huge privilege, a boon worthy of God, to have been allowed to run this risk for the chance of once receiving Holy Communion. Were we to collect into one all the human actions that have ever been done in the world, with all that was noble, generous, heroic, gentle, affectionate about them, and place them by the side of the act which a man performs in receiving Communion, they would seem less than nothing, a shadow of a shadow. It is brighter than all glories, deeper than all sciences, and more royal than all magnificences. But what are all these ways of measuring the dignity of Communion but like the leaves of the forests and the sands of the sea which we play with when we try to make a little child understand eternity, and which in truth we ourselves understand as little as he?

Neither, amid higher or more spiritual thoughts, must we forget to meditate with holy fear on the temporal judgments, by which God avenges the profane reception of the Blessed Sacrament. The Holy Ghost bade St. Paul reveal to the Church that because of sacrilegious Communions many of the faithful are visited with sickness, and some even with temporal death. It is as if the interpositions of the divine indignation, which in days of old protected the Ark of the Lord, gathered now around the adorable Sacrament. Durandus, in his Rationale, tells that for many years

in Rome there were so many sudden deaths about Easter that the public attention was drawn to it, especially as there seemed no reason in the ordinary course of things why the average should be so greatly exceeded always at the occurrence of that moveable feast. At length the pope received some light by which he was led to infer that this annual visitation of sudden deaths was in consequence of the number of sacrilegious Communions made by those who were fulfilling the Easter precept. In consequence of this he added the following verse to the paschal hymn:

> Quæsumus author omnium,
> In hoc Paschali gaudio,
> Ab omni mortis impetu
> Tuum defende populum;

which since the correction of the hymns has stood thus:

> Ut sis perenne mentibus
> Paschale, Jesu, gaudium,
> A morte dira criminum
> Vitæ renatos libera.*

Benediction is as it were the evening sacrifice, as it is when noon is past that it is most usually given It is as if the sense and instinct of catholic devotion would fain fill the afternoon with the Blessed Sacrament, as Mass fills the morning, as if it could not wait from morning to morning without some manifestation or use of the Sacramental Jesus, or at least without Him could not keep His own feasts, or those of His Mother, the angels, or the saints. Moreover, as if to correspond to

* Durandus ap. Arbiol. Desenganos Misticos. ii. 17.

this affectionate craving in the multitude of believers, the Church seems with the more facility and abundance to allow the various worships of the Blessed Sacrament, in proportion as the wickedness, heresy and ignorance of the world outrage and blaspheme the mystery of love. St. Philip once beheld our Lord in the Host at Exposition giving benediction to the kneeling crowd, as if it were the natural attitude and customary occupation of His goodness in the Blessed Sacrament. It would be difficult to find words to express the greatness or the reality of the graces which our dear Lord imparts to us at Benediction. They fall not only on the cares and sorrows, the troubles and temptations, the faults and unworthinesses, which we venture to spread before Him at the moment; but they light also on all the weak points of our soul of which we ourselves are ignorant, and on our present circumstances the danger of which we are unable to perceive, and on the evil spirits around us, making them stupid and nerveless, and on our dear Guardian angel, rewarding him for his charitable toils, and enlightening and invigorating him in his blessed office. We must remember also that the grace of Benediction is not only in the faith and love which it excites in our souls, great as is that boon, but that it comes from Him, solid, powerful, and substantial, purifying and creative, because it participates in the reality of the Blessed Sacrament itself. Everything which has to do with this mystery enters behind the veils into this awful reality, and thus has a characteristic life, which is like nothing else in our devotions. In this reality lies the attraction of the Blessed Sacrament.

This is not the place to enter upon the practices which

holy men have devised for Benediction. Every one will follow the bent of his own devotion. So much may be said: the Gospels mention three especial benedictions of our Lord, and to some one or other of these we may spiritually unite all the Benedictions of the Blessed Sacrament which we receive. One while He blesses little children, as in the tenth chapter of St. Mark, and we may in spirit prostrate ourselves beneath the shadow of His outstretched sacramental arms, as if we were little ones, and desired nothing so much from Him as an increase of that childlike simplicity, with which He Himself is so intensely pleased. Again, we read that at the Ascension, when he was parted from the apostles, He lifted up His hands and blessed them, and at once their sorrow was turned into exceeding joy, and their timidity into bravest zeal for souls. There are times and duties when we are fain to have these graces of joy and zeal multiplied in our sad and weary souls. Again, there is the Doomsday benediction which He describes Himself as giving; Come, ye blessed of My Father, enter into the kingdom, prepared for you before the foundation of the world. We may unite ourselves to this benediction to obtain the grace of final perseverance, the dearest of His gifts, because it is one so altogether His. There are some, if I may dare to recommend a practice myself, who are so overwhelmed with the extent and variety of their own wants and of our Lord's gifts, that at the moment of Benediction, they bow their heads, and at each sound of the bell repeat that prayer of one of the saints of the desert, Sicut scis et vis, Domine! As Thou knowest and willest, Lord! and then add, remembering that we are blessed that moment

by the very substance which was taken from Mary, those words of the Office, Et innumerabilis honestas cum illa, And all kinds of purity with her! as if these two ejaculations concentrated all they had to say, and all they would fain in that brief moment lay before the Sacred Heart of their dear Redeemer.

The Tabernacle is the fourth sacramental mystery. How beautiful is the silent patient life of that prison-house of love! Everything about our Lord has such endurance! It does not come and go like a transient flash of grand lightning, deepening the darkness of the night. It is not a visitation which is over before we have realized it. But just as he stood quietly among His apostles in the amazing beauty of His Resurrection, and said, Handle Me and see, so does He abide with us in the Blessed Sacrament, that we may get to know Him, to outlive our tremulous agitation, and the novelty of our surprise, and to grow familiar with Him, if we can, as our life-long Guest. There we can bring our sorrows and cares and necessities at all hours, when there is no ceremonial of the Church. We can choose our own time, and our visit can be as short or as long as duties permit or as love desires. There is an unction and a power in the mere silent companionship of the Blessed Sacrament which is beyond all words. Members of religious communities accustomed to sleep under the same roof with the Blessed Sacrament, know the feeling of anxious loneliness and the sense of some unsatisfied want when they are away from home. The feverishness of Good Friday passes upon their spirits, when they are staying where there is no Blessed Sacrament in the house. The ways of visiting the Blessed

Sacrament must be as various as the souls of men. Some love to go there to listen; some to speak; some to confess to Him as if He were their priest; some to examine their consciences, as before their judge; some to do homage as to their king; some to study Him as their Doctor and Prophet: some to find shelter as with their Creator. Some rejoice in His Divinity, others in His Sacred Humanity, others in the mysteries of the season. Some visit Him on different days by His different titles, as God, Father, Brother, Shepherd, Head of the Church, and the like. Some visit to adore, some to intercede, some to petition, some to return thanks, some to get consolation; but all visit Him to love, and to all who visit Him in love He is a power of heavenly grace and a fountain of many goods, no single one of which the whole created universe could either merit or confer.

The fifth sacramental mystery is Exposition, than which the Church bestows upon her children no more thoroughly maternal boon. Da Ponte* says, that the sight of the Blessed Sacrament is the "richest vein of prayer," and he would have us look up humbly at the elevation at Mass, to catch a glimpse, like Zaccheus of old, amid the branches of sycamore, of the Saviour momentarily passing by. What riches then for the spirit of prayer, when for long quiet hours the Church exposes Him for our adoration and delighted love? think it is Lanzi, but I am speaking from memory,† who gives three methods of devotion at exposition, for those

* Dux Spiritualis, Tract i. cap. xxi.

† The book to which I think I am referring is the exquisite collection on the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, published at the Propaganda press by Archbishop Cullen.

who prefer to go prepared with a method traced out for them. The first is to regard Him on His sacramental throne as the Brazen Serpent lifted up by Moses in the wilderness, whereon all who gazed were healed of the mortal bites they had received from the serpents; for this is one of the most eminent and beautiful types of our Lord in His office of Redeemer. We have all been bitten by the infernal serpent, and are sick with our wounds, and it is to Him we must look, and a look is sufficient, for the healing of our wounds. Or again we may gaze upon Him as exalted and enthroned as the Head of creation, according to that passage of the Apocalypse,* "The Amen, the faithful and true witness, who is the beginning of the creation of God." We may approach Him as it were in the company of all His creatures, and present ourselves to Him for His blessing, and give free expression in our hearts to the loyal joy we feel in being His creatures; for to be a creature, rightly considered, is our highest honour and our most precious right. Or again, which I have already spoken of, we may look upon Him as our Judge, comparing the silent gentle majesty of the Host with His blaze of glory at the Great Assize; and we will be beforehand with the terrors of His judicial royalty, by making peace now with His sacramental meekness.

Viaticum is the sixth mystery of the life of the Adorable Host; and who can tell its power? for it comes on the verge of life, and stretches out beyond it, and clasps and buckles together life and death, time and eternity, mortal suffering and immortal bliss. We die in the strength of the Viaticum, our judgment is tem-

* iii. 14

pered by its weakness, and our purgatorial pains are cooled beneath its shadow, and its energy waxes not feeble till it has landed us with more than angelic hand, at the feet of God in heaven. Foregoing life, the coming journey, the untold spiritual and invisible combat, the many-sided act of dying, all find their mysterious completion in the plenitude of the Viaticum; and the very flesh falls to dust, and is resolved into its original elements, bearing away with it the unseen force, the indiscernible and immeasurable and indivisible Seed which will one day call it all back, make it cognizably and numerically the same, and bathe it in a flood of immortal beauty in a glorious Resurrection.

The seventh mystery of the Blessed Sacrament is its Procession, the highest culminating point of ecclesiastical worship and catholic ceremony. In it, as I have said in the Prologue, is expressed the notion of triumph. Our Sacramental God proceeds around the Church with all the pomp the poverty of human love can shed around Him, as the Conqueror of the human race. It is then that we feel so keenly He is our own, and the angels can claim less in Him than we. Procession is the function of faith, which burns in our hearts and beams in our faces, and makes our voices tremulous with emotion, as our Lauda Sion bids defiance to an unbelieving world. It is the function of hope, for we bear with us our heaven which is on earth already, our reward who has put Himself into our hands as it were in pledge, and so we make the powers of hell to tremble while we tell them by shout and song how sure we are of heaven, and the adorable Sacrament meanwhile flashing radiance unbearable into the terrified intelligences of our unseen

foes. It is the function of love, for it is the timid, happy, heartfelt, venturous use of our right to be familiar with Him. The Procession is moreover a pathetic representation to Him of all life, private, social, political, and ecclesiastical; for what are all lives of men and families and states and churches, but processions of exiles, pining, toiling, travelling home to Him, and yet through this mystery, not only to Him, but also in His company?

Such is the seven-fold manner in which the Blessed Sacrament is the life of the Church, and its grand life-giving power. But nothing can show its power more wonderfully than that the very shadow of it should itself be one of the greatest powers on earth. I speak of Spiritual Communion, which is in truth the Communion of the angels. Nothing can show its power with Jesus more wonderfully than the innumerable times in which the desire of Communion has enabled the soul to receive the real Communion by some stupendous miracle, as has been already related of St. Catherine of Siena and other saints, and eminently in the case of St. Juliana Falconieri, communicated through her breast without manducation: that is, her communion was real, without being either spiritual or, strictly speaking, sacramental; as theologians make manducation necessary to the latter. The Council of Trent* recommends it to the faithful; and St. Thomas† says, They are considered to be communicated spiritually and not sacramentally, who desire to receive this Sacrament; and they eat Christ spiritually under the species of this Sacrament; so that, as Scaramelli says,‡ they do not only receive Jesus spiritually,

* Sess. xxii. de Sac. Miss. c. vi. but especially Sess. xiii. c. viii.
† p. 3. qu. 21. art. 1 and 2. ‡ Diret. Ascet. i. x. vii.

but this very sacrament spiritually. So the old martyr, St. Ignatius, says to the Romans, I do not desire the pleasure of this world, but I desire the Bread of God, the heavenly Bread, the Bread of life, the Flesh of Jesus Christ the Son of the living God, and the drink which is His Blood, which is love incorruptible and life eternal St. Alphonso, in his sweet little treatise on Visiting the Blessed Sacrament,* says, that our Lord showed to Sister Paula Maresca two precious vessels, one of gold and the other of silver, in the former of which He preserved her sacramental Communions, and in the latter her spiritual Communions. Joanna of the Cross† affirmed, that she was often visited in spiritual Communion with the same graces she received in sacramental, and, with a sigh, she exclaimed, O rare method of communicating, where neither leave of confessor nor superior is needed, but only Thine, O my God! The Blessed Agatha of the Cross so pined with love of the Blessed Sacrament, that it is said‡ that she would have died if her confessor had not taught her the practice of spiritual communion, and then she used to make two hundred spiritual communions every day. Surin and Scaramelli both assert that some souls receive sometimes greater graces in a spiritual than in a sacramental Communion; this is of course rare, and when it happens it is not through defect of the Sacrament, but defect of fervour in themselves. Surin, in his account of the favours he received after the famous possession of Loudun, has a chapter on the graces that came through the Holy Eucharist, and in it is this pas-

* p. 12 of Duffy's English translation.

† Lohner, Bibliot. Predicat. Art. Commun

‡ Barry, Année Saincte tome 3. p. 89.

sage: "Moreover it often happened that my soul was reduced to such an extreme want of that Bread of life, that when I did not communicate, its languor was so great as not only to impart itself to my body, but often to make me unable to take any food; and bread and wine giving me no refreshment, I was as it were constrained to take into my hand the bread which was before me, and to pray our Lord to give it power to invigorate me. I then ate the bread with that intention, and found that it had the same supernatural taste which I experienced in the Host, and this taste was so distinct and sensible, that I could not doubt from the strength it gave me but that it was our Blessed Lord, who in His infinite goodness had regard to my extreme desire to communicate, and thus nourished and satisfied my soul by the virtue of His Divine Body, which I received in desire with the same plenitude as if I had in effect been communicated by the hand of a priest."*

"This Food," says St. Catherine of Siena, speaking of our Lord's Flesh and Blood,† "strengthens us little or much, according to the desire of him who receives it, in whatever way he may receive it, sacramentally or virtually;" and she then proceeds to describe virtual or spiritual Communion. St. Theresa‡ is speaking of the very great importance of the soul's remaining alone in our Lord's presence, and thinking only of Him during the time of thanksgiving after Communion; and she speaks of spiritual Communion by the way, when the

* Histoire Abrégée de la Possession de Loudun. partie 4ieme. liv. ii. chap. iii.

† Dialogo. Trattato dell'Orazione. cap. lxvi.

‡ Camino de Perfeccion. cap. xxxv.

immediate subject before her is the disposition we ought to bring in order to receive our Lord worthily; and from this she is led to remark that these dispositions alone, even without the sacramental reception of our Lord, are productive of many graces to us. Her words are as follows: "Whenever, my daughters, you hear mass and do not communicate, you can make a spiritual Communion, which is a practice of exceeding profit, and you can immediately afterwards recollect yourselves within yourselves, just as I advised you when you communicate sacramentally; for great is the love of our Lord which is in this way infused into the soul. For when we prepare ourselves to receive Him, He never fails to give Himself to us in many modes which we comprehend not."

We read in the life of St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi that it was the custom in her monastery that, when daily Communion was hindered by the illness of the priest or any other cause, the nuns should communicate spiritually. The usual signal for Communion was given in the morning, and all being assembled, they prayed for half an hour, and then made a spiritual Communion. It was on one of these days that the Saint was communicated by St. Albert the Carmelite, saying the Confiteor, and the Domine non sum digna, and doing all that she was accustomed to do when receiving Communion; and she afterwards declared that she had seen the same saint with the pyx in his hand, going to communicate the other nuns. Her enlarged charity ardently desired that others also and especially those of her own monastery, should have a great hunger for that most holy Sacrament, and

this as well for the glory of God as for the good of their own souls.

We also read of her what will remind us of the gift Juan d' Avila attributes to our Blessed Lady. God, says the saint's biographer, gave her the grace to see Jesus in the bosom of her sisters under various forms. She saw Him in some as an Infant; in others at the ages of twelve, thirty, and thirty-three years; in others, suffering or crucified according to the desires, perfection, and capacity of each nun. Once, being in company with the other sisters, she glanced on all, and then said to one of her companions, O how I love these sisters, regarding them as so many tabernacles of the Blessed Sacrament, which they so often receive and conceal in their breasts! One Easter morning, whilst at table in the refectory, her face became so cheerful and glad, as actually to shine with delight. One of her novices, who was sewing, perceived this, and said to her in confidence, "Mother-mistress, whence proceeds that joy?" "From the beauty of the Divine Presence," replied the saint; "for I behold Jesus reposing in the hearts of all the sisters." "In what form?" rejoined the novice. "All glorious and risen," she replied, "as the Church represents Him to-day."*

It is said of St. Angela Merici that when she was forbidden daily Communion, she supplied by fervent spiritual communions in the mass and often felt her heart as completely inundated by grace as if she had made a sacramental Communion, and she left as one of her legacies to her order an earnest recommendation of this devotion.† Father Squillante, of the Naples

* Life. Oratorian Edition, pp. 245-249.

† Salvatori. Vita della Santa. lib. ii. cap. iii. p. 83.

Oratory, in the life of Sister Mary of Santiago, of the Third Order of St. Dominic, which rivals Carmel as a mystical garden of delights to the Heavenly Spouse,* tell us that her love of the Blessed Sacrament was such that she had at last come to make a spiritual Com munion at almost every breath she drew, so that in her were fulfilled the words of Jeremias† that in the desire of her heart she snuffed up the wind of her love, and that none turned her away.‡ Sister Francesca of the Five Wounds, an Alcantarine of Naples, used to visit the Blessed Sacrament in spirit when she could not go to the Church, and was often seen raised from the ground, with open arms, and her face turned to the nearest church, exclaiming, O my Spouse! my Spouse! O the joy of my heart! Would that I had the hearts of all men to bless Thee with! O my dear Jesus! how is it that I am without Thee to-day? O happy tongues, that have received Thee! O happy walls, that shut up in those churches my dear Good! Would that my heart

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* It is not one of the least blessings for which English catholics have had to thank the infinite compassion of their Lord during the last few years, that we possess now the Third Order of St. Dominic in England. Those who are conversant, indeed we find the strength and consolation of their lives in the Acts of the Saints, well know that there is not a nook of the mystical paradise of our Heavenly Spouse where the flowers grow thicker or smell more fragrantly than this Order of multitudinous childlike Saints. Nowhere in the Church does the Incarnate Word show His "delight at being with the children of men" in more touching simplicity, with more unearthly sweetness, or more spouselike familiarity, than in this the youngest family of St. Dominic.

† ii. 26.

‡ Squillante Vita di Suor Maria, lib. ii. cap. iv.

were a burning furnace of the fire of love, huge as the great world, to love Thee with! O happy priests, who are always near this Sun of Justice, this most sweet Lord! And she satisfied her love by frequent spiritual Communions, which were her remedy especially in times of spiritual desolation. Nay, her spiritual communions passed not seldom into real ones; for she was communicated by St. Raphael, who was her Guardian, as the Blessed Benvenuta used to be by St. Gabriel. Repeatedly at the mass of Father Bianchi, the Barnabite, the chalice used to be snatched away by an invisible hand, which was St. Raphael's, and then returned; on one occasion the Precious Blood was fully half consumed; and Francesca said to him, My Father! had it not been for St. Raphael who told me to leave it that you might consummate the Sacrifice, I should have drunk it all!* In the life of Maria Scolastica Muratori, a Roman lady, by Father Gabrielli of the Bologna Oratory, we read that she tried to make a spiritual Communion every time she raised her eyes or drew her breath, so that, as she said, Were I to die suddenly, I should die as it were inhaling my God. Another of her devotions was to make a spiritual Communion in set form, whenever she saw Communion given to any one in the church.†

What must the reality be, of which the shadow is such a power? If we had been with Jesus in Galilee He would have been all in all to us, when we knew His Divinity. He would have been our first thought in the

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* Vita dai Processi. parte ii. cap. i. pp. 148, 149, 151, 155.

† Vita lib. ii. cap. viii. cap. xiii. lib. iii. cap. xi.

morning, our last at night. So He was with His Mother. So He is with His Church. So should He be with us on earth, as He is at all hours with those in heaven. Sometimes we seem to get a glimpse of the deep abyss of love which the Blessed Sacrament truly is, and we begin to sink beyond our depth in joy, and love, and wonder. We can pray no prayer, but our silence itself is prayer. We can utter no praise, but then our whole soul itself is praise. And tears begin to burn our eyes with fire, when alas! the world has made some noise in our soul, or self has drawn attention to itself, and the light is gone. But in heaven it will not be so. O that we were come therefore to that happy shore, to that first unveiled sight of Jesus, which is our beatific welcome to our only true and eternal home!

THE EPILOGUE.

REPARATION.

I.

We began with Triumph; we must end with Reparation. Poor race of men! so must it ever be with all the gifts God gives us, with all the merits He compassionately showers down upon us. Earth is not the home of triumph. It must be the exception here, and not the rule. There must be something sorrowful even about our joy; and we never love God so deeply as when we are touched by the wrongs which we have done Him. Sorrow is the Divine part of earthly goodness, a sorrow that soothes the heart, enriches the soul, and makes the whole man happy with a durable and contented happiness. So must it be now. We began with Triumph; we must end with Reparation.

What a vision of the Divine Magnificence it is, which we have seen in the Blessed Sacrament! It is the sun and centre of our mysteries, the fountain of our doctrines, the inspiration of our art, the perfection of our worship, the food of our souls, and the resurrection of our bodies. We have seen that it is God's greatest work and as it were the crown of all His works, that it is the most full representation of the perfections of the Undivided Trinity,

the epitome of all Jesus, His lives, mysteries, characteristics, ends, and unions, the magnet of souls, and the real life of the whole Church, full to overflowing with a variety of touching manifestations, and rich and incessant in its graces to men. In what way should we expect that our Blessed Lord would give us this sublime institution? We might have thought He would have founded it with all the solemnities of a Divine Legislator, that it would have been given to us as a boon for which we could never sufficiently thank Him, as a trust the responsibility of which ought to weigh gravely upon our whole lives, as the reward of our faith in Him, over which we might triumph and rejoice perpetually. It would seem as if the Holy Eucharist rather than the Resurrection would be put forward as the reason for completing the number of the apostles, as the prime evidence of the mission and love of the Son of God, and as the glorious end of His merciful coming. We might suppose that the epistles of the New Testament would contain little more than the enforcing of the doctrine of the Eucharist, or the rubrics for its consecration, or the varieties of loving devotion with which it would be our duty to surround it. Yet if we fancied this, we should have shown how little we knew our Lord's way, or had caught the true spirit of the Incarnation. He came in the Blessed Sacrament as He came into the world. He says little of it, and makes no parade. He clings to His old silence, to His customary obscurity. He lets Himself be found out rather than displays Himself. He comes in that quiet, modest, unassuming way which is His wont, with what I may call that bashfulness, which is the most amazing characteristic of all the Divine Works.

He waits till He is standing on the very threshold of His Passion. Its shadows are already cast over His spirit, and their chief effect is to increase His love for His disciples. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. The clouds of gloom had begun to encompass them also; and how much deeper would that darkness have been if they had known then, as He so terribly knew it at that hour, that they would all forsake Him and fly! It is then that He institutes the Blessed Sacrament, as if to give them His greatest consolation when they were in greatest need. And yet even then, so like Him, so like the spirit of His love, He does not put it to them as a gift or a consolation; He hardly bequeaths it as an affectionate legacy; but He makes as if He were the person obliged, not they, and begs of them, as a kindness in their power, a token of love which they could give and He should value, that they would do it always in remembrance of Him. It was a last dying wish. He did not claim it as a right, nor exact from them an acknowledgment of the magnitude of the blessing; but He put enough of precept into it to re-assure their timid love and shrinking awe in celebrating mysteries so august and dreadful. O to what an art did not Jesus reduce the delicacy of love! He would persuade us that when we say Mass or receive Holy Communion it is He who profits rather than we, His glory that is fed rather than our souls, His interests that we seek before our own; and all this that our devotion to the Blessed Sacrament may be both a worship and a love, yet not so much a worship as a love.

Our Lord has done everything to strip His sacra

mental Presence of the apparel of fear or the brightness of His proper regalia. Even the devotion to it is characterized by an affectionateness which enables us at once to see that the fountain of the Blessed Sacrament is the Sacred Heart of the Incarnate Word. It was its greatest effort, its richest effusion of itself, far more so than that love which even when it was dead made it court the spear to let out its last few drops of blood and water. Yet, for what end is it that men seem mainly to use the Blessed Sacrament? Alas! only to make the wound of that dear Heart wider! For what is the life of the Blessed Sacrament but a life of eloquent sufferings? The Eucharistic Sufferings are quite a mystery of themselves, a mystery apart. As our Lord is dead in the Blessed Sacrament, yet only mystically dead; so does He suffer, yet only mystically, therein. It is the living Lord, the glorified Lord, yet suffering. And these Eucharistic Sufferings are at once the strong meat of the highest and most sublime sanctity, and also the sweet nutritious milk of babes in Christ, of hearts that are hardly clear of their sins, but are clearing themselves day by day.

II.

The principal of these Eucharistic Sufferings are five in number. The first is the Helplessness of His sacramental life. The magnificent spaces of the wide heavens are the room He claims for the vastness of His glorified Humanity. Freedom and power and joy belong unto Him as they belong to none else, and to nothing save the omnipotence of the Most High. All the help of all creatures is from Him, and none can help Him. There is not an intelligence that knows, or a mind that

reasons, or a pulse that beats, or a limb that moves, but the knowing, the reasoning, the beating and the moving are all from Him. Yet was ever helplessness like His in the tabernacle? Was there ever captive cooped up in narrow cell, as He in the little circular dungeon of the pyx? Was ever infirmity more complete? The bedridden patients of the hospital have more control over themselves than this King of glory whom love has caught in the meshes of the Sacrament. He is our prisoner under lock and key, and we bring Him out when we will, and show Him to the assembled people that they may be certified that He has not escaped. O my captive God! what words can I use which have the sound of weakness in them, which are sufficient to tell the weakness to which Thou hast willed that my priestly power should bring Thee, as if Thou hadst said, O sinful man! if Thou wilt not honour Me as Thine Omnipotent God, at least Thou shalt pity Me as thy helpless prisoner? Any how, cost what it will, Thou wilt have love. And Thou shalt have it, dearest Lord! for if I can do no more, I can at least hate myself for my little love, and that counts for love with Thee.

The second Eucharistic Suffering is Persevering Obedience. Our Lord is not a prisoner only; He is a slave also. He is essentially a King; His Name is written on His garment and on His thigh, King of kings and Lord of lords. It is His business to command; and He rejoices in the vastness of His power, the immensity of His supreme dominion. For empire is to Him the occasion of munificence, and sovereignty multiplies the opportunities of mercy and compassion.

He waves His sceptre over eternity, and over millions of uncreated worlds, as well as the countless creatures He has already made. For aught we know the mystery of creation may be yet in its infancy; it may but have begun with the angels and ourselves, and space may yet have to be strewn with numberless creations. Yet never did monarch abdicate his throne with circumstances of more humiliating pomp than Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. It is as if all kingdoms were His, but the kingdom of men's free hearts. Even from His power they could withhold them, if they pleased. But that kingdom of free hearts was just the very kingdom He had set His own heart upon; and he has flung away the rest, and come to win this one for Himself, and He will serve for it as a bondsman rather than miss it, even as Jacob served for Rachel, only it is not for fourteen years that He will serve, but even up to the day of doom. There is not a depth of obedience to which He will not descend when bidden. The voice of a wicked priest, the gutter of an heretical city, the heart of a loathsome sinner, all these try, and only try that they may demonstrate the obedience of the Heavenly and Almighty Slave. O why is it we do not flock, we sons of men, to our dear Saviour's Coronation? Why do not our hearts rise up and crown the Uncrowned, Him who uncrowned Himself of His great crowns, that we with nervous happy hands might put our little crowns of puny love on the long hair which covers His beautiful Head?

To this Helpless Life and Persevering Obedience must be added the Eucharistic Suffering of Outraged Love. The very thing for which He has made Himself

both a prisoner and slave is withheld from Him by the cruel free-will of His neglectful creatures. He knew He could not be worthily loved. He knew that none could love Him worthily but Himself. Even His Mother and St. Michael cannot but fall short of what He deserves. But at least the sons of men could love Him more than all things else beside. At least they could mourn that they did not love Him more, and mutually inflame each other's heart to worship Him with a more abundant generosity and a more filial tenderness. Yet some outrage His love by open blasphemy, and denial of His presence. Some by abandoning Him, and refusing to come to Him when He calls. Some by coming uncalled, and outraging Him by irreverence and by sacrilege. Alas! what do we ourselves, but outrage Him by carelessness, unthankfulness, coldness, familiarity, or voluntary distractions? For one who outrages the majesty of the Blessed Sacrament, a hundred outrage His love. Because love is its very crowning excellence, men take love as the especial object of their wrong and injury. O my Jesus! how is it that Thou so bearest with our sins? How is it that Thou hast not altogether withdrawn this dear mystery to heaven, and hushed the sound of mass, and unveiled the empty tabernacles? When Thou didst choose Judas, Thou knewest he would betray Thee. When Thou wentest up the hill to Calvary to drink the last dregs of Thy tremendous chalice, Thou didst foresee how little the world would come to care that its Creator had died for it upon the Cross. But couldst Thou have foreseen, that Thursday night, the return that men would make Thee for that Blessed Sacrament, and yet for all that,

as if every rag from the poverty of our love were so precious in Thy sight, couldst give Thyself up to us in this mystery? O how wonderful Thou art! How unfathomable is Thy love! How past all understanding Thy passion to be loved!

The fourth Eucharistic Suffering is insulted Abjection. Why has He come to us in such miraculous littleness, and with an equipage of such appalling humiliations? Why in this mysterious Sacrament have His wisdom and His power played with the similitudes of annihilation, as if He would bring Himself to the very verge of nothingness, and seem to disappear in it, to be created afresh out of fresh nothingness? Why has He studiously excluded from Himself everything outward which could conciliate respect or inspire esteem, and clothed Himself with the commonest and ignoblest materials that earth could furnish? Why all this abjection, except that love was to find its account therein? Yet the very vileness of His apparel, the very facility of His approach, the very cheapness of His maintenance, are all turned against Him, and what love meant for points of attraction man's coldness makes opportunities of insult. They repel Him by the very arms He holds out to embrace them. They deny His reality, or they leave His altars unfurnished, or they look upon the Blessed Sacrament rather as their own convenience than His condescension. Surely, to look at, or to be weighed in the scales of this world, He is the most unkingly of kings. But it is love has made Him so. And our love, were it wise and enlightened, would see that God was never so wonderful as in abjection, never so visibly omnipotent as when He shows that He can abase His infinite majesty down to the dust of earth, never so wor-

shipfully pure, as when He lies beneath the feet of men and is not stained by their treading on Him. Ah! Lord! which shall outdo the other, our malice or Thy love? Thou wilt invent artifices of abjection to win our love by their very pitifulness, and we shall convert every one of Thine own artifices into fresh capacities of wounding Thy Sacred Heart! But Thou wilt weary our wickedness by the excess of Thy beautiful patience, and wilt disarm our insolence by the gentleness of thy forbearance and the charm of Thy fidelity. O majesty whom nothing can provoke! O power without Thy thunderbolts! They trample Thee under foot and Thou utterest no complaint: they pierce Thee, and Thou bleedest, and yet no voice. O how Thy silence pleads with the hearts of men, and what conquests art Thou not ever winning by the very utterness of Thine inglorious abjection: for Thou wilt not so much fight with the pride of men and tame it, as cheat it and take it unawares, and make it only a reason for loving Thee, and a means whereby to love Thee more!

The fifth Eucharistic Suffering is His mournful Unvisited Solitude. Solitude must press on Him whose innumerable court in heaven sleeps not day or night, but is ever surrounding Him with the festive ceremonial of a sinless worship. And what prophet would have foretold that God would come, the beautiful Uncreated Wisdom, and have pitched His tent amid wandering men, and that they should have fallen away from Him, as if he were an uncouth foreigner, a repulsive leper, "a worm and no man?" It is as if He were a stricken sheep; and so He is. We might have thought the very inanimate mountains would have been moved, and would

have risen and made new chains and ranges, grouping themselves around His tabernacles. The very beasts we might have supposed would have come to Him, domesticated by His presence, and have asked His benediction, as they did to Adam amid the shades of paradise. Much more the hearts of men. When the light of heaven came and lit Himself on earth, surely earth would be so far like heaven that it would be every man's trade, occupation, profession, leisure, and ambition, to worship the Blessed Sacrament. We must have ate and drunk and slept, for He willed it so, and we must have earned wherewithal to feed and clothe ourselves; but otherwise the church would be our home. We should need no other lodging. Moreover it was not some elect souls that were to come to Him, but all those for whom he died, and that is all the souls that ever were and ever will be on the earth. For as a French philosopher has well said, "God loves each man as much as the whole human race. Weight and number are nothing in His eyes. Being eternal and infinite, He has no loves which are not immense."* And yet see in what solitude His people leave Him. When they wished to make Him king in Judea, He hid Himself and left them. Now that He asks only love, they in their turn leave Him and hide themselves from Him. When He was in the solitude in the wilderness the wild beasts came and bore Him company. They were glad to troop around Him, and fix their great gazing eyes upon the human beauty of their Creator. There was worship in their wonder, and homage in their companionship. But O! the awful

* Joubert. Pensées. i. 103.

solitude that reigns around the tabernacle! The rich olive tree feeds a little star of unsteady light in the heaven of His sanctuary, and for how many hours night and day, in how many sanctuaries, is that His only honour! Sometimes He must forego even that, lest thieves should come and steal Him, not for His beauty, oh no! they will fling Him on the ground, but for the thirty pieces of silver that the vessel which contains Him may be worth. He will not let His angels help Him. Nay, rather the very permission of the awful deed can He convert into an artifice to win unusual love, because of the processions and benedictions of expiation to which it will give rise. And art Thou then, dear Lord, no company to Thy creatures, or at least unwelcome company? Is not the very air near Thee life and joy to our hearts; and the little lamp, and the veil upon the tabernacle, the token of Thy residence, and all the other signs of Thy Nazarene poverty, are they not all dear to us as memorials of the Saviour's home? Why stay, O Lord, why stay? Dost Thou not miss the songs of heaven, and the unfailing incense of its praise, and the multitude of spirits and of souls whose beings are nothing else but one burning love of Thee? What can I do that I have not done? said God of old. Nay, Lord! I cannot tell Thee. Thou hast long since exhausted all I could have conceived, as well as depths I durst not have dreamed; and now these Eucharistic Sufferings, this Helpless Life, this Persevering Obedience, this Outraged Love, this Insulted Abjection, this mournful Unvisited Solitude, this Second Passion worse than that other one of Calvary—indeed what canst Thou do that Thou hast not done, O Lord?

III.

In a word, God is a mendicant for love in the tabernacle of the Blessed Sacrament. In the manner of His Sacramental advent He compressed into one all the mysteries of the Infancy and outdid them; and now in the fashion of His Sacramental residence He compresses into one all the mysteries of His Passion and outdoes them. How do we receive the Divine Mendicant's petition? In what way do we minister to Him in this His second Passion? Men either believe or they do not believe. If they do not believe, their treatment of the Blessed Sacrament is accordingly; and, however unworthily we may in reality treat Him ourselves, there is hardly a day passes when keenest acutest pain is not caused to us by what is said and done and written about our Incarnate Love in this mystery of His predilection. Sometimes they whom He has loaded with blessings repay Him with insults and blasphemies. In the columns of some miserable journal, or on the platform of an excited meeting, whose tumultuous feelings are not truly the intoxication of divine love, men whom the prayer of some unknown nun before the Blessed Sacrament has just rescued from a tremendous calamity, or from whom the Mass offered that morning in the neighbouring catholic chapel has averted the uplifted arm of an angry God, will pour out scurrilous profanities either with open and avowed unbelief, or with a professed belief in the Incarnation of the Son of God, which life-giving mystery their impieties are in reality assailing quite as much as the glorious and salutary dogma of the Blessed Sacrament. Or a man whom the Incarnate Word has been pursuing with minutest love

and most forbearing grace through long years of intel lectual vanity, puerile self-praise, and the baneful indulgences of luxurious effeminacy, will fill His purse with gold by holding up before a deluded crowd an unconsecrated altar-bread, which either in his ignorance or his imposture he declares to be the object of catholic worship, the Body of our dearest Lord. Some men live by the altar, not by serving it, but by blaspheming its mysteries. Awful thought! Quiet, soft, enervated, domestic men, easy-living, and comfort-seeking, yet kind-hearted in their sphere and amiable in their circle, will rise up in their pulpits, and fulminate eloquent anathemas against a belief which their mis-statements show they do not understand, and whose appalling thoughtless blasphemies fall as much on the Immense Omnipotent Babe of Bethlehem as on the Adorable Host of Catholic altars, while to wife and child and family amid the soothing comforts and delicate softness of a modern parsonage they will read, not deeming they apply to them, the words of Holy Writ, The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*

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* We in England are not yet so fortunate as to be able to congratulate ourselves, as our neighbours across the Channel have done, on the changed tone of controversy. Plantier, in his Conferences at Notre Dame, in the Lent of 1847, uttered these words. A l'équité de ces aveux, nous avons joint, depuis assez longtemps la bienséance du langage. On ne ramasse plus dans la boue, pour les jeter à la face du catholicisme, des termes de mauvais goût ou d'ignobles images.....C'est bien encore du blasphème; mais on le dit généralement avec une certaine politesse; on se sert le plus souvent, pour le rendre, d'expressions mesurées; l'accent qu'on y met, à part quelques emportements dont nous avons gémi naguère, est calme, modéré, respecteux, et c'est, pour ainsi dire, en lui

Sometimes a feeling will break out in a town against the Church of God. It has been so in England, it has been so in America, as I have already said. No one can tell whence or why it comes. Yes! whence it comes is plain,—from the spirit of all evil, for by his works may we know him. But it seems as if it was in the air like a pestilence, or as if the people had been chafed by some devilish mesmerism, and were, as in truth they are, possessed with devils. For awhile they toss about like an unquiet sea getting up a storm. When Satan perceives that his tools are in order, the crowd proceeds to the catholic church, with yells and cries of hideous import, with which I will not pollute my page. They may be grave Englishmen professing intense respect to the order and majesty of law, or liberal Americans where each man's own liberty seems to make him so impatient and intolerant of his neighbour's equal liberty. They break down the doors, do much wanton mischief in the church, yet gather no spoil. They let the priest pass; for though they hate him, he is a citizen, and has personal rights, and after all it is not him they seek. They want God. Their ferocity is only inspired for the Blessed Sacrament. They wish to tear Him limb by limb, or float Him down the sewers, and they are at once appeased and quelled when they have consummated the terrific Deicide. And yet who are they? Often honest workmen, with many natural vir-

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baisant les mains, qu'on arrache le sceptre à ce géant du passé, sur la couche glorieuse ou l'on suppose qu'il expire. Certes, il y a loin, Messieurs, de cette hostilité honnête aux grossiers persiflages du dernier siècle. On a franchi tout un abime. *Conferences de* 1847, p. 15.

tues. There is one whose child Jesus healed of the small-pox last month because the rough father's heart was breaking with the prospect of parting with his boy. There is another whose wife lay in the collapse of cholera a week ago, and though prayer was infrequent with him, he wrestled in his agony with Jesus, and Jesus raised her up when human skill could do no more. There is not one in all that multitude whom our Blessed Lord does not know and does not love, for whom He did not shed every drop of His Precious Blood, and vouchsafes now to yearn for his conversion with a love whose fondness, intensity, and fidelity the wildest romance of earthly passion cannot adequately shadow forth.

Or sometimes thoughtless protestants, who if they realized what they were doing would never do it, will wander into a catholic church almost more to show their contempt and wound the feelings of some poor worshippers, than even to satisfy an idle curiosity. It is their glory to stand while we are kneeling, to put themselves between us and the altar, to go nearer than they see us go, to assume attitudes which they would think it ill manners to assume in an anglican or wesleyan meeting-house. They will make remarks out loud, or utter inarticulate noises of contempt, or even so far forget themselves as to put on their hats, or stare into people's faces as they return from Communion, or stand by the holy-water stoop and ridicule the piety of the poor. Yet these are persons who would behave well in a drawing-room. They are men or women of education and of good breeding, more often women because the devil can more easily beguile their sensibility, and they would not

in society say a word or broach a subject that would pain the feelings of one whom they met. Their manners may be faultless, their demeanour grave, their deportment stately and correct, yet here they are grimacing like possessed people before a catholic altar: just as the possessed in the gospel "wallowed foaming" before the visible Jesus. Why is this? Surely it is not all themselves. It is the demon who enters into them that he may the more flagrantly and with greater scandal insult the mystery of our faith, which he hates above all others, because above all others it is a mystery of love.

Or it may be that ridicule is the weapon which is to pierce the Sacred Heart of the world's indulgent Saviour. Sit at that barrister's table, or listen in that college common-room, or stand by that mess of youthful officers, and see how similar are the phenomena. They are the sons of gentlemen and gentlemen themselves. They pique themselves upon it. You could not without danger of being honourably murdered, express a doubt of it. And in truth you will find that they are generous, kind, forgiving, forbearing, even unselfish, through the livelong day. Life might pass delightfully among such men. Their delicate considerateness and affectionate courtesy could never become tedious or commonplace. Though grossness is not the world's worst evil, it is its most uncomfortable one; and the society of these men would keep it from you like an invulnerable shield. Yet let the catholic religion, or especially the Blessed Sacrament, come up in conversation, and every vestige of the gentleman has disappeared. Your feelings are no longer respected. They are outraged in every way they can be,

and the more the pain is visible, the more their vulgar, boisterous, angry, unintellectual rudeness is delighted. They have forgotten their breeding; they have descended from their rank and high position; they have defiled their caste; they have become vulgar. Yet in the one case they are men whose noble profession teaches them nothing so much as judicial calmness and manly command of temper; in the other they are men of intellectual pursuits and above the average both of ability and erudition and accomplishments, and living in cities whose very air should kill littleness or shallowness or flippancy; and in the third case they are men whose light-hearted youth is not without its attractions, and which will leave behind it often in after years a worth that need not be ashamed to be compared with ancient chivalry. In all other affairs of life you may trust implicitly to the honour and the kindliness of men, who, if brought across the Blessed Sacrament, seem to strip themselves of every gentlemanly feeling, of every moral principle, and even of the very beliefs of natural religion. How shall we explain this, except that it proves our Blessed Sacrament to be indeed our Lord? It is supernatural: it is possession. They have become devils who were gentlemen, and they will be gentlemen again when the devil has gone out of them.

Even the ignorance of the Blessed Sacrament is a dishonour to its majesty and gentleness. Men, who are ashamed to be ignorant of some popular science, feel no shame in being utterly without knowledge of the religion of so many millions of their fellow-creatures, of the greater number of the kingdoms of civilized Europe, of so many millions of their own fellow-sub-

jects, and of their own ancestors in bygone days. It would not be possible to exaggerate the ignorance of Catholicism which reigns among Protestants. To give it anything like a fair representation of its reality, we should be thought to be drawing a caricature, ludicrous and extravagant, incredible simply because of its outrageousness and apparently monstrous exaggeration. And there is no part of our holy religion of which this is more true than the Blessed Sacrament. None of them knows what it means or how we understand it. They only have a dreadful instinct that it is God, and hate it with a hatred which outstrips literary dislike or controversial bitterness. And this ignorance does itself dishonour Jesus. When He has done such wonders for His creatures, filled the earth with the miracles of His mercy, and asks only in return that He should be known and loved, surely it is an outrage of His honour and His goodness, that men should remain ignorant of Him, and refuse to study what professes to be His work, and of which they are not slow to glory, most inconsistently, at once in their hatred and in their ignorance.

But I am sick at heart with what I have already said. Such thoughts, such words, such facts, in connection with such a subject! There is much more of a like sort: but let us take it for granted and pass on.

IV.

See, then, for how much we children of the Blessed Sacrament have to make reparation; and how fervent as well as abundant must our reparation be! Have we any work in life which presses so much as this? Is

there any better use of time, any fitter preparation for eternity? And are we doing anything else? Surely day after day we are rejoicing in the mass, or setting aside our other occupations to go to benediction. Day after day we are gathering round the tabernacle, and telling Jesus how we love Him, and how with bleeding hearts we mourn over the daily dishonour of His real presence and residence amongst us. We should feel a day incomplete, even our busiest day, if we had not made some act of tender reparation to our sacramental God. How beautiful must the sight of catholic believing hearts be to that dear Inmate of the Sanctuary, overflowing with faith and love, like so many Magdalenes devouring his feet with kisses, washing the very dust away with tears, each one of which has a whole heart in it, and wiping them with the hair of our head, as if what our vanity had most prized was only to be reinstated in its honour by some menial use for Him! O how the incense of unbroken prayer is ever rising from us to His sacramental throne; and the perpetual flames of ardent reparation light up His altars as on the night of some exulting feast! But is all this true? It seems unavoidable: the contrary is inconceivable: yet is it true?

Alas! if we turn from those who do not love because they do not believe, to those who because they believe cannot help but love, it is a sad and wintry scene on which we are called to look. If the sins of unbelievers were materially more startling and repulsive, there is a greater formal want of love in the coldness of believers. We wound the Heart of Jesus more keenly and acutely than they who do not believe. He can look on them

with the forbearance of pity, as we look on one beside himself. But we, His own familiar friends, how deep are the wounds which we have the power to inflict upon Him! At mass how weary, distracted, and irreverent we often are, though our faith tells us it is the same thing as if we had stood with our Lady and St. John beneath the Cross on Calvary! At benediction, how little are we filled with a spirit of interior devotion, and how often are little domestic arrangements allowed to interfere with our going there! Are our communions at all what we could desire in the way of preparation, or of thanksgiving, or of fervour in the receiving? Are our visits to the Blessed Sacrament as numerous as our facilities and our leisure would allow, to say nothing of the necessities of our own soul and those of others to drive us there? Nay, are we not sometimes ashamed of our faith in the Blessed Sacrament, when in the presence of unbelievers and called upon for some outward recognition of our worship? And on the whole, do not we ourselves, as much as any one else, compel Him to lead the life of poverty and abandonment which so touchingly characterizes the Blessed Sacrament? So it is that with those who believe and those who do not believe, our Blessed Lord in His Sacrament is surrounded, not with choirs of angels or rings of various saints, so much as by groups of every variety of evil character, as He vouchsafed to be in His blessed Passion. They who do not believe represent one class of them, the Jews, another Herod, another Pilate, another the Roman soldiers, and so on; while alas! we who believe are either Judas who betrayed Him, or Peter who denied Him, and Peter unfortunately without Peter's tears, or the rest

who ran away and fled, or at best the curious and indevout spectators of the Crucifixion, some indifferent without dislike, and others sentimental without compassion.

V.

What remains then for us but reparation? There is no true child of the Church of whom it must not be true to say that devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is his special devotion. It cannot be otherwise. Without it there are no other devotions, and of its supremacy over all the rest catholics cannot lawfully have two opinions. For it is the only devotion which is a divine worship at the same time that it is a devotion also. This is its peculiarity and its pre-eminence. But whether we look at it as a devotion or as a worship, in both points of view reparation occupies a most prominent position; and it belongs to all. For all souls who have a right to love are bound to reparation.

How immense is the reparation which the poor can make to the majesty of Jesus in His Blessed Sacrament! for what is more dear to God, more precious in His sight, than the worship of the poor? Jesus was poor Himself; He is poor now; the Blessed Sacrament is the very depth of His poverty. He chose to redeem the world as a pauper, when He might have redeemed it as a king. Poverty suited Him, had attractions for Him. It was His taste, His bent. There was something conformable in it to His infinite wisdom which he did not find in wealth. As the Saint of saints, He was the founder of a huge religious order, the order of the poor; and He meant the rich to exist principally as benefactors of His order. O it rejoices me to see the poor around

the tabernacle of our Sacramental Lord, getting as near to Him as they can, and drinking in the beauty of His marvellous veils. They seem to understand Him, and He them. Life is so dark and dreary, so strong and harsh, that it drives them to Him with a reality and simplicity that even sorrow can only imitate far off. Worship on, dear Poor of Christ! you are doing for Him what none but you can do. O that it might be given Him to feed ever on your continual love!

How immense also is the reparation that the rich can make to this sweet Sacrament! And how needful for themselves, as it is welcome to Him! So far as the best interests of the soul are concerned, we know from His own lips that riches partake somewhat of the nature of misfortune. The possessors of them therefore have by their own acts to compensate for their disadvantages as regards salvation. They can never get over the fact that He chose to be poor rather than rich: they can only get round it; and this it behooves them to do. The Blessed Sacrament is everywhere regarded by the world as an intruder in His own creation; but when He is, as in an heretical country, an exile, nay more, a proscript and an outlaw, who has forfeited even the rights of a citizen, and like a felon cannot by law inherit property, while He is a nuisance and a misdemeanour if He appear in the streets,—it deepens the mystery, and adds incredible pathos to His Eucharistic Sufferings. Now, the rich are either those who have inherited the faith from the martyrs, or those whom God has gone out of His way by a miracle of mercy to call into the true Fold; and both these classes have peculiar obligations of their own to the Blessed Sacrament; the one because He was al-

ways theirs, the others because He was not always theirs, but is theirs now. What Jesus gives us in this mystery is His whole Self and His time; in these two things consists the peculiarity of His sacramental life. It is Himself, and He abides with us even to the evening of the world. So as He gives Himself wholly to the rich, they must be generous with Him, not in mere money, but in sacrifice and self-denial and love and an undivided Heart. So as He gives the rich His time, and receives them when they will, and occupies Himself with their affairs, and makes them His business, and puts forth especial wisdom and especial forbearance to direct them through the needle's eye into the heavenly kingdom, they too must give their time to Him, to His Sacrifice, His Benediction, His Exposition, His Tabernacle; and so make reparation for the outrages His love endures.

How beautiful is reparation, and what a mystery that God allows so high a work to creatures so poor as we! As if we could build up His ruined glory, and raise temples out of ruins, we who are what we know ourselves to be, something so much worse than those who know us best could for a moment suspect! Reparation! the very thing for which He Himself exists in the Blessed Sacrament; for if it had not been necessary He should come in humiliation to redeem us, it had not perhaps been necessary He should have hidden Himself in this lowest depth of secret silent love. What is so full of heart as reparation, or more full of joy even while we mourn? What is redemption but reparation? What else was Mary's compassion? What else was the earthly occupation of the Sacred Heart? And is it not its occupation in heavenly glory, as well as in the mys-

terious Host, this very hour? O my poor country! how much she needs, and how beautiful she is! How rich in all else; but in God's gifts, in God's graces, how sadly poor! Not because His Hand is less munificent, but because her heart is closed against Him. O my countrymen! who have seen days almost of persecution, at least of deadness and obscurity, who have seen the dry bones of heresy come to life and give out punctual harvests every year of numerous and manifold conversions, how dear to you and to the strength of that faith which has been in you pure and firm and bright from reason's earliest dawn, how dear to you should this deep and quiet devotion be of reparatory love! And you whom God has called so marvellously and so sweetly into the inheritance of catholic truth, which was not yours by birth, do you not feel as the people in the Gospel must have felt on whom Jesus had worked a miracle, almost ready out of love to disobey Him, and to proclaim His love even when He bids you nourish your humility in silence? How dear, how doubly dear must the task of reparation be to you, who love much because you have been forgiven much, and have a whole life's work for God to do in half a life or less! See! what began in the high notes of triumph, how naturally it ends in the sweet low strains of plaintive sympathy, and dies down into the silent full heart of grateful pensive Reparation!

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